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# THOUGHTS

ON THE  
ESSENTIAL REQUISITES

FOR

## Church-Communion,

*BAPTISM, and the LORD'S SUPPER,*

As connected with

### CHRISTIAN MISSIONS:

BEING AN EXAMINATION OF THE SENTIMENTS  
OF THE

REV. S. GREATHEED, F. S. A:

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

*TWELVE MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS,*

BY

W. MOORHOUSE, JUN.

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*"Speaking the truth in love."*

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## PREFACE.



*HOWEVER* his pretensions may be allowed, or disputed; the writer of the following sheets does not think that he sends them into the world without fear and trembling. Not that he distrusts a discerning, impartial, and liberal-minded public; or that he wavers as to the sentiments advanced in his pages; but because the importance of the subjects considered has often, to him, been overwhelming. The essential requisites for the Lord's supper cannot be a point of mere speculation. They involve the momentous questions,—What is pure religion?—What is “the root of the matter?” Inquiries more solemn, more necessary, more connected with our happiness and the Divine Character, never were presented to the human understanding. This importance is still more enhanced by their intimate association with Christian Missions, to which no one who

*loves immortal souls can be indifferent. How far the author has illustrated this, and other matters, or how far he exemplifies his own motto,—“speaking the truth in love;” others must decide: his best endeavours have not been wanting. If he might ask one indulgence, he begs it may be remembered, that this little volume is the result of such remnants of time as could be honourably employed after faithfully discharging the daily task of instructing youth, superadded to the more weighty concerns of the ministerial office. To the candour of his readers it is now committed, without affectation, and with a hope that he can properly regard the verdict of others; for he has long been conscious, that the man who thinks meanly of public opinion, gives the public abundant reasons to think meanly of him.*

*Brampton, near Rotherham,*

*Nov. 1820.*



*ANALYSIS*  
TO THE  
T H O U G H T S  
ON  
CHURCH-COMMUNION.



INTRODUCTORY observations,—Mr. G's system stated in his own words, PAGE 4—It confounds moral and positive institutions, also natural and revealed religion, 6—tends to abrogate the means of grace, 9—opposes Christian missions, 12—exhibits false views of moral obligation, and virtually disannuls it, 14—banishes the unbelieving and immoral from public preaching, 22—is utterly inconsistent with the principles of dissent from national establishments, 24—renders church-fellowship, and a knowledge of Christian experience, impossible, 26—How far Christian experience is cognizable in admissions, 28—Human tests considered—Mr. G., notwithstanding his objections, must practise them himself, or have no Church at all, 30—His inconsistency in demanding requisites for any Christian ordinan-

ces, and the liberty which his system gives to mere formalists in religion, 37—The Lord's supper, on his principles, must be an initiatory institution like baptism, contrary to the whole tenour of scripture, 40—His charge of inconsistency against such as admit to the Eucharist by an experience, and yet practise infant-baptism, answered, 44—The subject considered in reference to Adult proselytes from other religions to Christianity, 49—The important question discussed—What are the essential, scriptural requisites for the Lord's supper? 52—Religious feelings considered, 65—How their existence may be known, 67—Mr. G's system has long ago been practised, and found to be overwhelmed with difficulties, 71— Conclusion.

### ERRATA.

Page 15, For irrevelant, read *irrelevant*.

28, and 186, the Latin ablative mark is wanting.

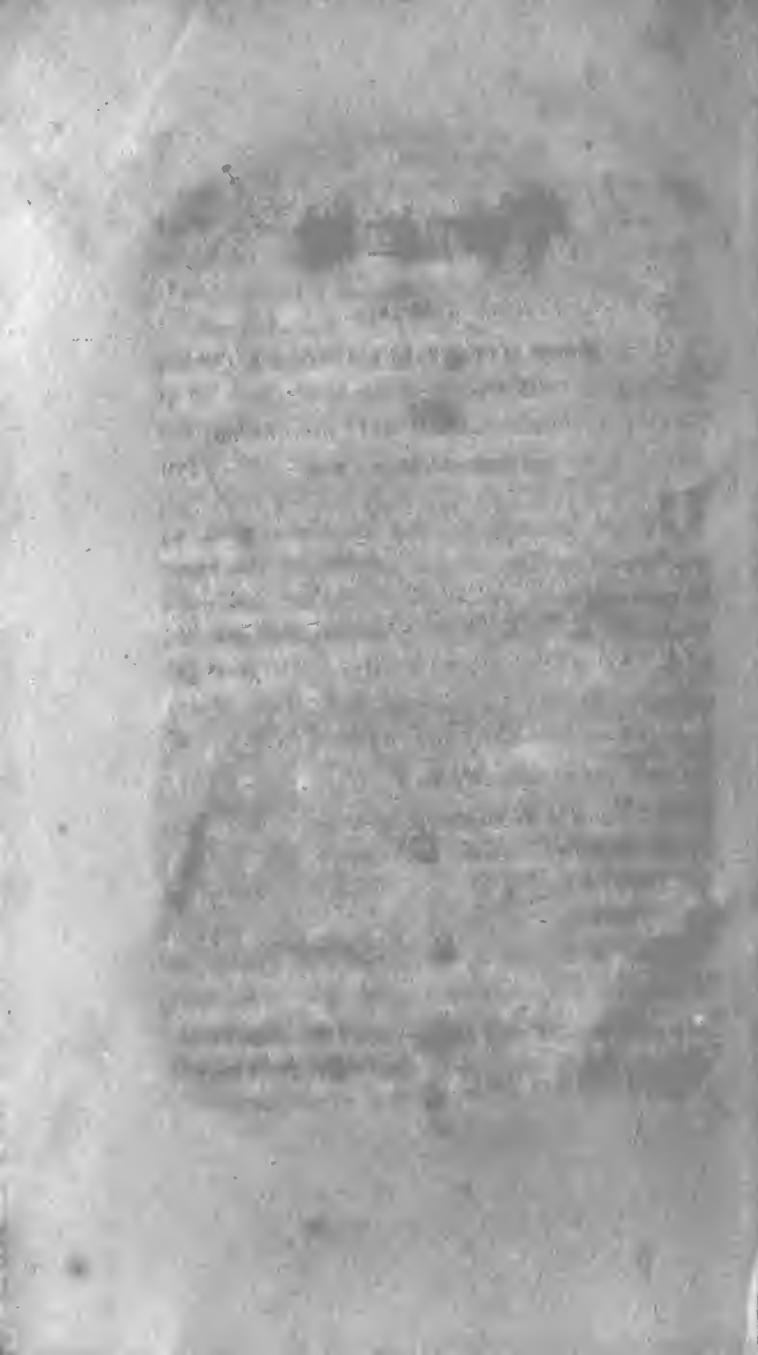
197, note, for 132, read 232.

182, for crash, read *crush*.

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# Thoughts

ON

CHURCH-COMMUNION,

&c.

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**O**F all institutions, the Lord's supper, as celebrated in Church-communion, is the most important; and an inquiry into the essential requisites for it, must be of the highest magnitude. As unreasonable severity, and over-rigid scrutiny, though not influencing final salvation, may cut off from the privileges and comforts of the fold of Christ, many whom he has graciously admitted to his bosom: so an unscriptural *laxity* may produce still more pernicious consequences, by plunging precious souls into the deepest abyss of ruin. Nicely to balance between these two extremes, is a point of wisdom not very easily attained.

Some remarkable papers on Christian institutions, lately written by the **REV. S. GREAT-**

**B**

HEED, F. S. A. call for more attention than they have probably excited; since they contain many positions on our present subject professedly “*uncommon*”; and, in the opinion of many, not a little *injurious* to the cause of vital Christianity. Considered as a Gentleman, a Scholar, a Christian, and a Minister, his sentiments, which have not been obtruded on the Public, but called for, and sanctioned by his Friends, *will* have weight with others, who are apt to consider character combined with talent, as argument and demonstration. For this reason, they imperiously demand that sober freedom of inquiry, sanctioned by the awful solemnity of the subject.

Several other papers, for and against, have also appeared; (1) but it is presumed, that the field is still open for much needful enlargement, and that some arguments, not yet advanced against *Mr. G--*, remain for consideration. Why he treats with such lofty indifference, one of his respondents (2) whose remarks were also called for, is not soon determined; unless it be that

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(1) In the Evangelical Mag. for 1818, p. 153, 155, 283. Also for 1819, p. 50. (2) Congregational Mag. for 1819, p. 285.

the latter has happily united so much of the *fortitèr in re*, with the *suavitèr in modo*. It is not uncommon for a writer to treat with silent, sovereign contempt, an argument which fairly overpowers him;—generally the best, and often the only answer his cause can furnish. It was anxiously expected, that some able writer would enter more fully into these investigations; but after waiting long without seeing it done; after reluctantly taking up the pen, and laying it down many times; after endeavouring in vain to forget the subject; the present attempt is made, in obedience to the loudest dictates of conscience, and with the highest possible feelings of respect, veneration, and love, which a stranger can be supposed to have for him, whose sentiments he presumes to examine.

Every one must give our learned author full credit for good *motives*, and for liberal charity, in his strictures; also his manner and temper, excepting his conduct to MR. GRIFFIN, claim commendation: but *no* motives can sanctify a dangerous, unscriptural practice, nor can the meekness of Moses defend it; and, when contending for it, even charity loses it's name and nature. Nay, these lovely coadjutors render it

more injurious, as the fabled Sirens of Antiquity, by their enchanting beauty, are said to have ruined mankind. His "uncommon" views respecting the Lord's supper, and the necessary qualifications for it, (with these *chiefly* we are concerned in our present animadversions) are unfolded in the following extracts.

"Every Christian originally participated in  
"the benefit of *all* the external institutions of  
"the Gospel. Baptism was the introduction to,  
"and the *pledge* of the rest. What then is more  
"likely to be inferred than that the *same* terms  
"on which we admit to the Lord's supper,  
"should be required for admission to Baptism?  
"I do not see, how we can reconcile our adhe-  
"rence to infant-baptism with our requisition  
"from candidates for the Lord's supper, of an  
"account of their spiritual experience. I do  
"not perceive, on what ground we have more  
"right to make this a test of admission to the  
"Lord's table, than to baptism. Why should  
"we exclude from one privilege, as unclean,  
"those whom, as holy, we have admitted to  
"that which is initiatory to it? The latter  
"(speaking of the Eucharist) demands the ex-  
"ercise of reason, a belief in Scripture, and a



“conduct consistent with it; in fact, just what  
“is requisite to edification by all other devo-  
“tional exercises. I am not aware of any  
“ground to suppose, that a *single* stated attend-  
“ant on public instruction, and devotion, in the  
“primitive churches, did not equally partake of  
“the Lord’s supper, (which was as constantly  
“administered) unless he was excluded from it  
“for notorious impropriety of conduct. *All*  
“external institutions were designed, and adapt-  
“ed to be the means of forming the Christian  
“character; *none* of them to be the tests of it’s  
“prior formation.

Of spiritual experience, he says, “God’s  
“word does not *connect* the participation of  
“external ordinances with so inscrutable an  
“object. It makes no distinction *whatever* in  
“this respect, between the Lord’s Supper, and  
“any other Christian Institution. I apprehend,  
“that, as soon as baptized children discovered  
“*capacity* for comprehending that Jesus Christ  
“is the Son of God, and that he died for sin-  
“ners; on their declaration of such a belief,  
“they would likewise be admitted to the Lord’s  
“supper. To partake of the Lord’s supper,  
“appears to me *no less* obligatory than to offer

“prayer and praise, and to require *no other*  
“capacity or *disposition* in the participant!!(3)

Here, the summary argument evidently lies, in generalizing, equalizing, and confounding *all* Christian institutions; and in supposing that none of them has any essential character, as specific, and distinctive from the rest;—that all demand the *same* requisites. This is the life and soul of his scheme; without which it has no originality, or even existence;—from no other premises could his inferences possibly flow. His professed “natural and rational distinction between Baptism and the Lord’s Supper”, (4) can refer only to their *subjects*;—not to the ordinances themselves; for he will allow, that, in the Apostolic age, “reason and a profession of faith”, were equally necessary to the Baptism of Adult proselytes, as for the Lord’s Supper; so that, in fact, *no* distinction is implied in his remark, as to the definite characteristics of the two institutions; especially if we consider, that, in Baptism, Adults are not “purely passive”;

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(3) See the *Evang. Mag.* for 1817, p. 471 et seq. Also for 1818, p. 504 et seq. *Congreg. Mag.* for 1819, p. 285 et seq. (4) *Evang. Mag.* for 1817, p. 474.

and, that, with the Eucharist, infants are not at all concerned. His continued parallels on Christian institutions run so smoothly along, in a style so neat and perspicuous; that, if readers once grant his premises, they will find some difficulty in evading his conclusions; except, as frequently happens, when he incautiously deserts his own Data. But if, after a very close, patient, impartial, and unprejudiced examination, there should be any reason to suppose, that his "uncommon" premises resemble the moving pillars of sand, raised, and driven by Numidian tempests; we shall have just so much reason to fear that his extensive corollaries will perish in the storm.

Certainly, the general duties of prayer and praise, properly called *moral* institutions, rest on a foundation very different from Adult Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. The former are the dictates of that natural Religion which the Scriptures imply, and sanction, as binding on all men indiscriminately, who possess the natural faculties of understanding, reason, and will; whether such accountable agents be good or bad, moral or immoral, regenerate or unregenerate, civilized or barbarous. SIMON MAGUS

was commanded to pray, and PAUL condemns the Heathens for not glorifying that God, whose visible works surrounded them. Other institutions, especially when considered as *positive*, suppose a written revelation; and, so far as they are positive, a species of character also; baptism being administered only to professed believers and their seed;—the Lord's supper only to such as in the reasonable judgment of charity, give adequate proofs of saving conversion. Mr. G—, by making *all* external ordinances require equal dispositions as the bond of obligation, at least as they refer to Adults, evidently confounds, not only all moral and positive institutions; but all acknowledged distinctions between natural and revealed religion. Positive institutions may partake also of a moral nature, and become *mixed*; but they cannot be obligatory, because not known till expressly revealed in the Scriptures; whereas prayer and praise, being moral commands spoken by the voice of Nature, ask for no other revelation, and demand no requisites, as their ground of obligation, which are not *inherent* in every intelligent mind. They would have been obligatory on all such throughout the world, had there been no written revelation.

With much surprise, then, we read, that “to partake of the Lord’s supper appears *no less* obligatory, than to offer prayer and praise; and to require *no other* capacity or disposition in the participant.” According to this, a poor, benighted Heathen, either must not attend a Missionary Prayer-meeting, or, while a Heathen, be admitted to Baptism and the Lord’s supper. Mr. G— laments that the converts from idolatry at *Taheite* do not partake of these latter ordinances; but his reasoning, pursued to it’s just, unavoidable consequences, banishes them from all means of Grace.

Very differently speaks the acute Dr. Butler. “Moral precepts are precepts, the reasons of which we see. Positive precepts are precepts, the reasons of which we do not see. Moral duties arise out of the nature of the case itself prior to any external command. Positive duties do not arise out of the nature of the case, but from external command; nor would they be duties at all, were it not for such command received from him, whose creatures and subjects we are.—Care then is to be taken, when a comparison is made between positive and moral duties, that they be com-

“pared *no* further than as they are *different*. “Unless this caution be observed, we shall run “into endless confusion.” Regardless of this caution, Mr. G- has confounded *all* institutions and plunged himself with his readers into “endless confusion.” BUTLER allows that “moral and positive precepts are in some respects *alike*;” but strenuously contends, that a comparison between them should extend “no further than as they are different.” Mr. G— has treated them as in *all* respects alike, and compares them accordingly. This is the radical failure of his system; and an error, as will appear in the sequel, subversive both to religion and morals.

But he does not *always* write in unqualified language; for he says, if Mr. Bishop, one of his respondents, “had stated what qualities he “judged to be requisite to a *profitable* participation of the Lord’s supper, that are not requisite for a *profitable* engagement in prayer “and praise, he would have rendered me service.” By “engagement” in prayer and praise, Mr. G— must mean “participation” therein, or his request would be absurd and sophistical, by speaking of participants in one ordinance, and administrators in the others. His papers

do not profess to consider the requisites for *administrators* in the Eucharist; nor will we impute such prevarication to him, as to suppose him contending about *them* in prayer and praise. He did well to use the word *profitable*, or he had been more than erroneous; and, tho' it is used, he is not less than inconsistent; for our obligations to *any* duty, positive or moral, rest not at all on it's profitableness, or unprofitableness; so that they make nothing for his argument, but every way against it. Mr. B—, or any other man, might safely grant all contained in Mr. G—'s remark. With equal propriety he might have asked, what qualities are requisite to a *profitable* participation of the Lord's supper, which are not equally needful to a *profitable* meditation on the glorious works of nature, which a GENTOO, or TAHEITEAN, is bound by the law of conscience to practice,—

“ To rise from Nature, up to Nature's God.”

This mode of argument would abolish the important duties of catechizing, and of searching the Scriptures; for we might demand, what qualities are necessary to a *profitable* participation of the Lord's supper, which are not needful for *profitable* instruction in Catechumens,

and in reading the divine Oracles? We allow all this reasoning, and what does it prove? Nothing—but that divine grace is essential to our profiting in all Christian institutions. But who, except Mr. G—, would ever suppose that, in all these institutions, such grace is essential to moral obligation? As he places all external ordinances on the same basis, as demanding the same requisites; and as he debars unbelievers, and the immoral from the Lord's supper, he must also forbid *them* to be catechized, or to read the Bible.

Mr. G— has long been among the most distinguished friends of Missions; and his papers profess to afford greater facilities to Missionary labours, by removing *supposed* obstacles out of their way. But the Public must now judge, whether his theory, so far from answering this end, does not paralyze all efforts in this grand work of benevolence; for if equal qualifications be needful in all Christian ordinances, Heathens, as such, should partake of all, or none. On *his* principles, when pleading for faith and morals as requisites, they cannot, while Heathens, partake of the Eucharist; and urging them to pray, or to praise, or catechizing them,



would, if *they* demand the same requisites, be equally inconsistent. What remains, then, but that our noble-hearted Missionaries should return to their native shores? But,—shall they? God forbid. Honoured men! Let them remain; gather congregations—baptize them on a *profession* of renouncing idolatry, (they may actually do this without true religion) and, when in the judgment of liberal Charity, suitable evidence of divine grace appears, introduce them into full communion. On these rational and consistent principles, making natural religion a step to Christianity, let them endeavour to evangelize the whole world. Baptism as a *rite* and a mode, is a positive ordinance, founded as to it's morality, in that relation which always exists between God and his creatures, but unfolded as to it's peculiar circumstances, and *formulæ*, in the Christian dispensation, though existing prior to that œconomy, as appears from the Baptism of John. But, so far as concerns the *subjects* of it, and the *duty* itself abstractedly, it is a *moral* ordinance, taught by the mere light of nature: for a Hindoo sees a reason why he and his family should be devoted to the Deity, however lamentably he may err in the manner of doing it.

By making *all* the duties of religion, natural and revealed, obligatory upon persons in very different, nay, in opposite circumstances; Mr. G—'s system seems to exhibit false views of moral obligation. That variety in circumstances produces variety in obligations, is an axiom founded in reason, and abundantly sanctioned by the holy Scriptures. With what propriety then, can he affirm, that “the Lord's supper is “*no less* obligatory than to offer prayer and “praise,” and that it demands “no other” dispositions in participants? An important question here arises, upon *whom* is it thus obligatory? Upon persons in the *same* circumstances, or in different, and even *opposite* ones? Whether he answer one way or the other, his cause is not supported. Any wise man will readily allow, that this ordinance is binding in the *same* peculiar circumstances, and in them only. Should he grant this; his principal, generalizing argument for equal requisites in *all* Christian institutions, is instantly abandoned. Should he say, that it is obligatory in different, and even opposite ones, he not only abrogates an essential rule in the Divine government, by confounding all moral and positive institutions; but we may justly ask, why does he debar the

immoral from the Eucharist, while he admits them to prayer and praise?

It is not irrevelant to our purpose to inquire, upon whom prayer and praise are obligatory? Upon all rational minds, or only upon some? If he answer upon all; then, as he rests the Eucharist on the same grounds, how can he exclude the profane? If it be "no less" obligatory, it must be universally so. Should he say that prayer and praise are obligatory only on *some*; he breaks to atoms all the powerful bonds of Natural religion, and abandons the world to anarchy, confusion, vice, and death. He blames MR. GRIFFIN, or some other respondent, for representing him as having advanced "flat contradictions;" but he knows, that there is no true *logical* way of refuting any position, but by reducing it to an absurdity, or contradiction,—that not to do this, is to admit his argument; and that it is the peculiar property of false reasoning to refute itself, whether it's Author admit, or deny, the well-known, and long-established maxims of truth. To forbid a respondent the common logical practice, called in the schools, "*reductio a l absurdum*," is to give up a cause as lost, by humbly begging the question at his hands.

Mr. G— infers from his own premises, “ that  
“ *all* external institutions were designed and  
“ adapted, to be the means of forming the Chris-  
“ tian Character; *none* of them to be the tests  
“ of it’s prior formation.” Thus he makes the  
Eucharist obligatory on those who are *not*  
Christians, as the means of becoming such, and  
yet uniformly demands Christian requisites  
before they can lawfully approach;—positions  
so contradictory, as to be unworthy of every  
intelligent mind. For, besides the folly, not to  
say the cruelty, of making a positive law equally  
obligatory with prayer and praise though not  
revealed, and of course not known; we may  
justly ask by what authority can *any* characters  
be debarred from the means of discharging their  
duty, and of becoming Christians? To say that,  
under the Gospel dispensation, all without ex-  
ception should come to this ordinance in a pro-  
fitable manner as regenerated, is only inces-  
santly repeating quite another question, never  
denied; viz. that certain qualifications are  
necessary, or that the regenerate should ap-  
proach; excepting it also infers it *not* to be the  
duty of the unregenerate. This abandons *in*  
*toto*, the argument which excludes the previous  
formation of Christian character, and which is,

in fact, a denial of religion altogether as a requisite for the Lord's supper.

We may apply this mode of reasoning to prayer and praise, if, as Mr. G— affirms, they claim the *same* requisites as the Sacrament. Who can deny that they are obligatory on *all* rational minds, in all circumstances? Yet, to suppose Christian requisites previous to that obligation, is not only a glaring contradiction; but we may demand to know, why are not Men debarred from those duties till the requisites appear? The requisites for an edifying and “profitable” discharge of these duties are quite a different question, having no concern with their ground of obligation. If Mr. G— exclude any from the Lord's table, merely as not possessing the requisites for an edifying, and profitable participation; he must also debar from prayer and praise, all who have not similar qualifications; or he cannot honourably contend for equal requisites in all these duties.

Our learned, and highly-respected Author furnishes us with the requisites for communion, by inferring, that the Lord's supper is obligatory on all who have a “capacity for it, except

they be notoriously immoral, or unbaptized.” (5) This excites an inquiry, who have a capacity for it? *His* answer must be, all who have a capacity for prayer and praise, since he affirms that the Eucharist requires “no other capacity or disposition in the participant.” But all rational Adults have a capacity for praise and prayer; and, according to this reasoning, they ought to receive the Sacrament, if not openly immoral. As he thus places prayer and praise on the *same* basis as the Eucharist, we have a right to argue upon them in the same way; which would prove that prayer and praise, and all similar duties, are obligatory on all who have a capacity for them, provided they be not openly profane! What a discovery is this!

Arguing from the admission of baptized Adults, he apprehends “that as soon as baptized *children* discovered *capacity* for comprehending that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he died for sinners; on their declaration of such a belief, they would likewise be admitted to the Lord’s supper.” He also thinks that, “the children of Jewish converts would

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(5) Evang. Mag. for 1817, p. 475.

“ be likely to partake of the Lord’s supper at  
“ the same age as they first attended the Pass-  
“ over; that is when twelve years old.” (6)  
These cases, as any one readily perceives, are  
by no means parallel; for, not to insist that the  
essential dissimilarity between the Passover  
and the Lord’s Supper renders a comparison,  
as to their requisites, altogether out of the ques-  
tion; Adult proselytes were admitted to the  
latter ordinance, not because baptized, but be-  
cause they were real believers, possessing genu-  
ine religion;—a very different thing from a  
“ capacity for comprehending that Jesus Christ  
is the Son of God,” or a declaration of faith in  
him. Though no age is fixed for admission,  
those of only “ twelve years old” cannot be  
expected, except in comparatively few instances,  
to give any declaration of faith which shall  
satisfactorily evince their true Christianity; and,  
notwithstanding the very pleasing appearances  
of juvenile religion in our day, it is presumed  
that Mr. G— has not known many decided  
Christians at “ twelve years old.” Those who  
do give evidence so soon should be joyfully  
admitted into full communion, not because bap-

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(6) Congreg. Mag. for 1819, p. 287.

tized as the offspring of Jewish, or other parents; but as renewed by divine Grace. But according to his system, he must debar from prayer and praise, those of "twelve years old" who make no profession of faith in Christ, or are guilty of immorality, if they demand the *same* requisites as the Eucharist. This would make sad havoc in family-religion. In reference to the admission of Adults, his salvo concerning heresy, and immorality, avails nothing, except he will apply it in all other institutions, and forbid heresiarchs, or debauchees, to honour their Maker in prayer and praise. The Eucharist can be obligatory only on such as "believe with their heart unto righteousness," and have the means of attending to it; but no previous participation of other ordinances creates the least claim to this, notwithstanding the unwarrantable stress laid upon the admission in primitive churches, of *all* baptized adults; a favourite position of Mr. G—'s, demanding more proof than he has given, when we recollect the cases of Simon Magus, and of that Ethiopian, who, he acknowledges, was going where churches and means were not known, "except from his Bible."

We have not yet seen all the injury done by



this scheme to the grounds of moral obligation;—it abolishes them altogether. If, as he contends, certain moral qualities are essential to full communion; and if, as he argues, the same are required in prayer and praise, then all attempts to persuade Heathens to worship JEHOVAH are vain, and without authority, till they become moral in their conduct;—christianity must be built on morals; not morals on christianity. Does not this much resemble the obnoxious, Antinomian doctrine, rising like the Phœnix from it's ashes; viz. that good dispositions are essential to all moral obligation? It is much to be wished, that he had stated explicitly, whether vital Christianity, i. e. regeneration, be, or be not, absolutely essential to full communion. Whether he maintain this or not, he must oppose himself, or leave abundant room for most alarming, tho' legitimate inferences. To deny this necessity, exposes the Lord's supper to such profane abuse, as destroys it's sanctity altogether; for if once the irreligious be *wilfully* suffered to approach, where shall we place boundaries? Should he say, that all communicants should be *truly* serious; then, if the same qualifications be needful before prayer and praise can be obligatory, he

makes Divine Grace essential to moral obligation, which destroys it wholly, as to these duties, where that grace is not bestowed. Should he agree with wise men, that grace is a necessary requisite for the Eucharist, tho' not the proper ground of the duty itself; (this is founded in the divine command) and that it is not requisite in other ordinances as any bond of obligation; what becomes of his argument for equal requisites in all external institutions? Should he contend for *profitable* prayer and praise, and an *edifying* attendance on devotional exercises; consistency demands an absolution from any obligation to these profitable duties for all who are unbelievers, or immoral;—this would prove, that, the more wicked Men are, the less they are obligated!!

Mr. G— thinks, that “ public preaching does not concern his argument;” and that “ the law of our country forbids us to debar any from entering our places of worship.” But to be consistent, he should *debar* them, and practically oppose the laws of his own country, if hearers be infidels, or immoral; so that public preaching very deeply concerns his argument, and, indeed, makes it appear in it's true light.

It proves too much;—consequently proves nothing. A congregation formed on this plan would exhibit a rare paragon of excellence;—yet it would display the striking singularity of rejecting those who have most need of religion.

Indulging a good-humoured, sportive sally against Independency, he says, that “some ministers avow that they only *preach* to the congregation, and *worship* only with the church;” and, by way of removing their supposed difficulties in acting consistently, he ironically advises them to dismiss those who are not Church-members, “without prayer or singing.” Irony is a dangerous weapon, though ever so skilfully used, and his may be retorted. For as he makes *all* external institutions require the *same* qualifications in participants, he cannot with any semblance of consistency, either pray, sing, or *preach*, when the unbelieving and immoral attend, as he debars them from the Eucharist. In the case stated above, he conjectures, that “their hearers who are not Church-members, will probably take the hint not to come till the text is taken;” but should those hearers be unbelievers, or immoral, they will more probably take Mr. G—’s hint not to

come *at all*. From his reasoning, how would many an unregenerate, hoary-headed sinner, conscious of his crimes, and of utter unfitness for the Lord's table, be ready to infer, that he must not supplicate the God of Mercies, or hear his word, or tune his praises! How would many a shrewd, sagacious Heathen, be likely to avail himself of such an excuse for not attending public worship! Many, equally attached as Mr. G— to the Missionary cause, are not a little concerned to see an argument professedly advanced in it's favour, so fraught with unhappy consequences, calculated to injure, rather than to promote the glorious object.

I have always understood, that, though very liberal towards other denominations, Mr. G— was a professed Dissenter, of the Independent, or rather, Congregational class;—he seeks for “a reform” allowing greater latitude in “our churches.” (7) But his reasoning appears the work of a dignified Clergyman pleading for his established Church; in which it is a law to exclude none from the Altar but avowed infidels, the openly profane, and the unbaptized.

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(7) *Evang. Mag.*, for 1817, p. 474.

On this point, he is one of her most distinguished advocates, since he makes baptism a plea for the Eucharist when the conduct is not immoral. "Why," says he, "should we exclude from one privilege, as unclean, those whom, as holy, we have admitted to that which is initiatory to it?" As a Congregationalist, (if such he be) he needs not be informed, that the law which enjoins admission on such terms, is considered by Dissenters in general as wholly of *human* origin, and as among the chief reasons of their Dissent; they justly supposing that it is very easy for persons to repeat their belief, to profess firm adherence to it, to refrain from gross vices, and to plead their baptism and confirmation, so as to enforce their claim to the Altar, with a power destructive of all rational, necessary inquiry, and knowledge of the parties;—public, legal sanction superseding private judgment. Should he urge this objection against Dissenters, we ask in return, (tho' the fact is not allowed) why does he blame their strictness? Would he wish the Gates of admission wider than those of our National Church? There could be no inconsistency in his having the same views on this subject, as

any good Divine of the English Church, or of any other, provided they were scriptural, and not forming a line of essential difference between two denominations; but to profess himself a Dissenter, yet to vindicate a sentiment forming a peculiar feature in another denomination, is, to use his own words, not only “uncommon, if not in some respects singular;” but makes us ready to suspect, that he is not far from it’s pale and honours.

Considered in all it’s bearings and ramifications, his scheme renders Church-fellowship not only difficult, but impossible. A gospel-church is, like other societies, voluntary; possessing an unalienable right to take cognizance of candidates for admission, both as to Mind and conduct; every member giving and taking the same privileges;—cognizance in one thing infers it also in the rest. To deny this, totally annihilates the Church of Christ, formed of those who first “gave themselves to the Lord and to one another.” If this cognizance be allowed at all, it should relate principally to feelings and experience;—the most essential parts of religion. Mr. G. thinks, that “the state of the mind, farther than as intimated

“by the outward profession and conduct, can  
“be known only to God.” But as the mind,  
the profession, and the conduct are reciprocally  
evidences of each other; it often happens, that  
the conduct cannot properly be known without  
previously ascertaining the state of the mind;—  
motives and feelings, manifesting themselves in  
various ways besides overt acts of immorality,  
are generally the proper clue to conduct, espe-  
cially when openly avowed. How would Mr.  
G— gain satisfactory knowledge of one whom  
he suspected of hypocrisy? Probably his con-  
duct exhibits nothing against him; and, as a  
theorist, his faith may be scriptural. Hypo-  
crites are known to a proverb, to be sound in  
opinions, and regular in deportment;—transfor-  
med into Angels of light. He acknowledges,  
that, “persons orthodox in their opinions, as  
“well as *blameless* in their external deportment,  
“may nevertheless be utterly destitute of per-  
“sonal and experimental piety.” Their profes-  
sion and conduct alone, then, according to Mr.  
G—’s own statement, are no evidence of their  
sincerity, or insincerity;—not of their *sincerity*;  
for they are “utterly destitute” of true piety:  
—not of their *insincerity*; for orthodox opini-  
ons, and a blameless deportment, constitute

that very species of evidence, which he maintains as alone evincing *real* Christianity; and if, as he avers, these are the only possible evidence to be had, we are deprived of all *Data* by which to judge for or against;—evidence in one case would be evidence in another. All we plead for, is a rational, *moral* evidence; but he, by contending for what is not evidence of any kind, renders judgment impossible; and church-members must be admitted *without* evidence, or not at all. The natural consequence of Mr. G—'s system is, to admit all applicants, irrespective of all character, leaving the event with God. Yet, exercising his own judgment, he excludes from communion, unbelievers, and the immoral; and *vicè versa*.

However desirable when it can be done, no charitable Man will contend for an experience, written, or given publicly *viva vocè*, as absolutely essential for communion; but the state of the mind should be satisfactorily, though not infallibly known; of which, conduct is very insufficient proof;— frequently none at all. Equally with Mr. G—, we “relinquish to God “the (*infallible*) discrimination of genuine spiritual experience.” His “very deplorable



disappointments" have compelled him to this; as if he had not always done it, or as if any sensible man would presume to act otherwise. Has he also relinquished to God *all* knowledge of spiritual experience? Can Man ascertain nothing of this? Is there no such thing in the religious world? If he can have no evidence of this, it has, in his mind, no existence. Yes, says our Author, profession and conduct are our only proof. But, as they form no evidence *pro* or *con* of themselves, spiritual experience cannot, on these principles be known at all. Indeed, he must consider any satisfactory knowledge of this subject as wholly impossible, for he calls it an "inscrutable object." To infallible knowledge no Creature can pretend; but are there not numberless gradations between infallible knowledge, and no evidence at all? We profess not to search hearts, nor to erect a self-constituted tribunal, demanding unreasonable proof, nor to settle the spiritual destinies of Mankind, amenable only to their Creator, by whom they stand or fall; but to learn from moral evidence, whether candidates be, or be not, likely to answer the end of admission;—we profess not to exercise our judgment infallibly concerning them, as related to God, but satisfactorily as related to us.

Mr. G— justly affirms, that the Lord's supper “demands a belief in Scripture, and a conduct consistent with it” Who is to decide on these things,—to say what is truth or falsehood, morality or immorality? The precious Bible naturally occurs as the only written, and *infallible* test,—the commands and precedents of Apostolic times,—the genuine language of inspiration, explained according to the analogy of faith. But, the important question will for ever return,—who are to decide upon *these* things, what they are, where they are, what they intend? Truly, Mr. G—, and the church over which he presides, though in every sense disclaiming “all human tests,” are fairly compelled to determine the matter to their own satisfaction, or not to admit members at all, except *without* decision, because *without* evidence. Thus the whole question resolves itself into the nature, and degrees of moral evidence; and into the right of private judgment in such cases, on which all church-order is founded. To affirm that Scripture is the *rule* of admission, but that the human mind, under the powerful influence of extensive charity, has no right to determine for itself *what is* that rule, is to admit all promiscuously without any rule;

—this conclusion, Mr. G—, with much justice, but with no consistency disavows; for it fastens on his system beyond the power of removal. This reasoning renders the admission, or exclusion of *any* members from *any* cause, literally impossible.

He advances as argument, that “all human tests are *continually* found wanting.” The word “test” is ambiguous; signifying a *rule* by which to judge; also the *trial*, or judgment itself, by an acknowledged rule. In the former acceptance, the Bible as “the law, and the testimony,” is the *only* religious test;—in this sense, all human tests are nothing but a sacrilegious invasion of Jehovah’s rights, which no Protestant Dissenter can approve. The Church of England appeals to her articles, creeds, canons, and homilies;—the Church of Rome,—to her councils, synods, missal, saints, relics, miracles, bulls, and the infallible chair;—a Musulman—to Mahomet, and the Koran;—a Bramin—to his Veda. But, with a conscientious Protestant Dissenter, when seeking for a test of truth, all these weigh no heavier than “the small dust of the balance;” nor does he consider as more important, a mere appeal to CAL-

VIN OR FLETCHER; TOWGOOD OR ROBINSON;  
GROTIUS OR LOCKE.

According to it's Latin derivation, the most proper, and important meaning of the word "test," is a trial or judgment, by some rule previously existing;—hence the common words, *testimony, testimonials, attestation, &c.* In *this* sense Mr. G— uses it, to prove that the religious "state of the Mind" can to Man be known only by the outward profession and conduct, as agreeing, or disagreeing with Scripture-rule. *Thus* it is now used; and in this signification it must be tolerated, or judgment is impossible. We are commanded to "*try* the Spirits, whether they be of God;" and the noble Bereans *tried* the Apostles by the Scriptures, whether "those things were so." Surely, when thus explained, human tests are in unison with the Holy Spirit, and not always "found wanting" when directed by him through the means of his word, especially if preceded by much deliberation, and fervent prayer. Nor are they *less* the decisions of the human mind because under such direction, any more than spiritual knowledge and zeal are not the sentiment and feeling of Man, though wholly produced by

divine agency. This influence, though omnipotent, leaves free the human mind. If such tests be *often* wanting, this only shews, that "to err is human;" and that, seeing the Holy Spirit does not always guide our judgment, "many creep in unawares." Though **JESUS**, our spiritual Head, has furnished an infallible rule for admissions into his Church; man, and only man must decide for himself what *persons* come up to it: for, in this age, God gives no express revelation respecting them, as he did in the case of Saul of Tarsus, saying to Ananias, "he is a chosen vessel unto me." Man must find out *persons*, by the rule and marks which God has given, or there can be no Church at all. The fallibility of all human tests is a *good* reason why a Man should not implicitly submit to another's judgment; but it is *no* reason why he may not exercise his own. To suppose otherwise would destroy all sentiment at once, and abandon the world to universal scepticism;—covering the earth with "gross darkness." If by "human tests," Mr. G—mean a rule to judge by, they are, in religious matters, totally inadmissible. Whoever pleaded for them in this sense, except arrogant pretenders to infallibility? But, if they mean the

exercise of judgment, in comparing Men and things, with an infallible rule *already* existing, and not at all originating in the human understanding, (this is all they *now* mean) they are essential to the dignity, free-agency, and accountability of intelligent minds. To allow such a judgment in reference to Christianity in general, and yet to deny it, as Mr. G— does, in it's most essential point,—experience,—is to renounce the living power of religion, for an empty, lifeless, and unprofitable form.

In the general momentous question, *What is truth?* tho' human tests are found wanting, every one (Mr. G— not excepted) pleads his right, and considers it no dishonour, to satisfy himself. The glorious, impregnable bulwarks of PROTESTANTISM stand triumphant on this sacred principle,—that no mortal is bound to obey the FIAT of another in Church-matters, but to “be fully persuaded in his own mind.” Here is our boasted SHEET-ANCHOR,—and though, as the famous CHILLINGWORTH says, “the Bible, and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants,” every one has a heaven-born right to ascertain for himself, from every source of evidence, what is contained therein. An unlet-

tered, godly Man has a better test of it's truth, from his own feelings and experience, than all the learned arguments necessary to the conviction of others;—his belief survives the storms of life, when others “make shipwreck of faith.” The very same principles which support the general cause of Protestantism, as such, ought, doubtless, to support each individual society of Protestants throughout the world; and if a particular Church be one, definite, voluntary body, built on mutual sentiments, aims, interests, and conduct; human tests, when cautiously guided by Scripture-rule, cannot be forbidden in examining the requisites for admission. In *excluding* members, human testimony must be given against them, before the scriptural rule can be enforced; so that, if human tests are to be *wholly* discarded in admission, they must be equally so in separation. “As to “grounds of exclusion,” says Mr. G—, “I “would be wholly *decided* by Apostolic precedent, with it's reasonable analogy to circumstances.” Decision implies cognizance, examination, and judgment; therefore, it is presumed, he would exercise his *own* judgment, in ascertaining this “precedent,” and “reasonable analogy,” and in comparing with this

standard, the case of an obnoxious member. In such matters, he must decide *twice* before exclusion. What is this but ultimately a human test, exercised *twice* over? On what principles, then, does he claim for himself the right of private judgment in reference to the belief and conduct of persons, when admitted or expelled, and yet deny it to others as to spiritual experience? Is their claim less sacred than his, or is experience less important than sentiment or morals? By such a denial, he has, though unintentionally, undermined the foundation of all Protestantism, for which Millions have taken "joyfully the spoiling of their goods," or finally sacrificed their lives. One grand cause of diversity in religious opinions and denominations, also of Mr. G—'s belonging to his own class, is the exercise of private judgment, or of those very human tests, he so much disapproves. Complete uniformity in these things, however near we hope they may approach, is, in our present condition, more to be desired than expected. The Church of England, or any other church, as a voluntary society, has an undoubted right to frame for *herself* whatever creeds, or laws, she pleases, and also to say on what terms candidates will be admitted;—pro-



vided she allow others the same privileges. It is only when armed with penalties and the civil power, she assumes the attitude of compulsion, to enforce them upon *others*, that any Dissenter withstands;—knowing that his own Church, by whatever name it is called, rests, so far, on a basis exactly similar to the above. On these rational, just, and scriptural grounds, the Church of England dissents from that of Rome; and, for these reasons, furnished by her own previous example, we claim the liberty of dissenting from her. “*As ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye also unto them.*”

Coupling the ordinances together, as if both rested on the same grounds, Mr. G— says, “the point at issue is, what are the scriptural requisites to Baptism, and the Lord’s supper?” Thus the whole business is wisely brought into a narrow compass. Yet we do not see either wisdom, or consistency in such an inquiry, after his singular declaration, that “all external institutions were designed and adapted to be the means of forming the Christian character; *none* of them to be the tests of it’s prior formation.” Speaking of genuine, spiritual experience, he affirms, that

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“ God’s word does not *connect* the participation of external ordinances with so inscrutable an object. It makes *no distinction whatever* in this respect between the Lord’s supper, and any other Christian institution!” (9) How other friends to vital religion may feel after reading the above passages, I pretend not to say;—my feelings have been such as words must not describe. The very essence of religion is spiritual experience, without which it is only a name, a Shibboleth, a party-badge. To deny that this is connected with a participation of the Lord’s supper, is to maintain that *no true* religion is requisite; and to contend for religious forms after renouncing the thing itself, is to license hypocrisy, since it makes that to be religion which wants its very essence,—experience. Mr. G— insists upon “ a belief in scripture, and a conduct consistent with it;” but as he disclaims experience, his members only need to be formalists, both in faith and practice. If experience be not connected with the Eucharist, then religious *sincerity* as its fruit cannot be so connected. Thus the door is wide open for all hypocritical professors, tho’ known to be such!

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(9) Evang. Mag. for 1818, p. 506.

He contends, that "the state of the mind" can only be known to man by the outward profession and conduct. What can he mean by this "state of the mind," but sincerity, the fruit of spiritual experience? Can there be any sincerity without such experience? Yet, he says, *this* is not connected with the participation of *any* religious ordinance. To require evidences for "the state of the Mind," and yet to deny it's connexion with the Lord's supper, is to require what is utterly unnecessary. How can evidence be needful, if the very thing to be proved be unconnected with the ordinance? If we allow that profession and conduct are, as he asserts, our only evidence of the state of the mind, and if we take him wholly on his own ground; his reasoning would totally abolish both the essence of religion, and all necessary evidence,—if the former be denied, of what use is the latter? With these views, we do not wonder that Mr. G— should object to religious experiences being given, on the admission of candidates for communion.

Should he say, in self-defence, that he means the *infallible* discrimination of experience, he should have told us so, which he has not. This,

he knew, would be only “beating the air;” for what readers of our valuable magazines, where his papers appear, ever held such infallibility? Alas! the real, lamentable fact is, that his system infers no spiritual experience as requisite, and thus gives a deadly blow to vital godliness. Can his premises, from which such tremendous conclusions flow, be founded in that book, or sanctioned by that God, whose names are **HOLY?**

All requisites of Christian character, even in the Lord’s supper, are by Mr. G— openly disclaimed,—experience, the very essence of religion, is renounced as unnecessary,—institutions are only to *produce* requisites, never to require any,—the Lord’s supper is reduced to an initiatory rite like Baptism. What else can it be, if it does not imply the “prior formation” of Christian character? But in the case of our Lord’s disciples, (for Judas was not at the Eucharist) and in those who received that ordinance in primitive Churches, the Christian character was *previously* formed; and though Mr. G— uniformly denies the instruction of Proselytes *before* Baptism, we are as uniformly told that they previously believed, confessed

their sins, and repented. What is this but the formation of Christian character? Can faith, confession of sin, and repentance result without previous knowledge of divine things? John the Baptist first preached to gain enlightened proselytes, and then baptized. Mr. G— reversing the order of things, first baptizes *his*, and administers the Sacrament; then instructs them to become Christians by the use of these ordinances. He says, “Whether Paul baptized the twelve disciples of John, whom he found at Ephesus is disputed: but the original terms certainly do not prove that he did.” Most fortunate escape! if his readers will tamely suffer it; for on a superficial view, it seems to make nothing against him. But, though the “original terms” do not prove that PAUL baptized these disciples, they abundantly show that they were baptized by *some one*; and the passage, (1) so far from favoring the notion of Adult Baptism invariably preceding instruction, warrants an opposite conclusion.

Our author seems wishful to represent Christianity as a *school*, and *all* it's ordinances

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(1) Acts XIX ch. ver. 1--5.

as therein initiatory. What else can they be, if *none* require the "prior formation" of Christian character? But, most unfortunately, this general representation, by inferring promiscuous admission to the Eucharist, would deprive us of any institution as a feast, and a seal of the previous enjoyment of Gospel-mercies, peculiar to the "household of God." Most assuredly, we are authorized to admit *all* Mankind, who wish for such a privilege, into the seminary of Christ, as scholars, or catechumens; but to debar any from an initiatory ordinance, by demanding pure religion as a requisite, (this Mr. G—'s system infers) is insufferable; since it is demanding some proficiency of Christian character in *novitiates*, when first entering upon instruction. Such a demand restricts the institution to proficientes; and yet it is fairly inferred, to be initiatory;—of course, extending to all the world who become catechumens, or scholars! If this be not contradiction, what shall we call by that name? We are expressly commanded "not to eat" with the profane. Are they likewise to be shut out from the school of Christ, and from the Sacrament, if an initiatory institution? If initiatory, why exclude them? If we exclude them, how can it be ini-

tiatory? If the ordinance be *not* an initiation into the school, it *demand*s the “prior formation” of Christian character. Mr. G-’s statements, like the “flaming sword” at the entrance of Eden, turn every way against him. Tho’ Christ himself associated occasionally with the ungodly, and actually taught them in person before admission to any Christian ordinances, some of these statements *break up* his school by banishing them from it, if the Lord’s supper, from which they are excluded, be initiatory therein. Others of his statements render a peculiar Church of Christ impossible; since all Mankind, when willing to become scholars, claim admission to every initiatory ordinance,—of course, to the Eucharist, if such it be. Thus, the Christian religion, both as to form and reality, is virtually banished out of the world.

According to Mr. G—’s general reasoning, we should administer *all* Christian ordinances to Heathens, and Men of every character, immediately on going among them, without so much as a *hint* on the nature and design of such institutions. This very much resembles those societies in many parts of Europe, probably a copy, if not the relics of the antient ELEU-

SINIAN MYSTERIES of Greece and Rome; which, enveloped in "thick darkness," allure by a blind curiosity, and admit candidates, first to their symbolical rites,—then to their explanation. How different from the plan of Scripture, which enjoins previous self-examination; lest, by "not discerning the Lord's body," any should eat and drink unworthily! How this duty can be properly discharged, but by diligent use of every possible instruction, it is very difficult to say; and the sad experience of ages has taught us, that, without previous illumination, the observance of the Eucharist naturally generates presumption and formality, self-righteousness and superstition;—ignorance becomes the mother of devotion;—presumption—of crime.

Mr. G—'s papers constantly suppose that the Lord's supper requires *no other* qualifications than baptism; and he seems well aware, that, if these institutions, resting on different grounds, demand different requisites, his cause is not gained. But, will he seriously contend, that the Baptism of *infants* requires the same qualifications as the Eucharist? If so, he must altogether forbid their baptism, or maintain the



very singular views of some antient Fathers, and of MR. PIERCE among Moderns;—that infants should receive the elements: which is indeed absolutely necessary, and highly consistent, if these ordinances claim equal requisites; for then, they must receive both ordinances or neither. By placing both institutions always on the *same* basis, he is at a loss, “how we can reconcile our adherence to infant baptism, with our requisition from candidates for the Lord’s supper, of an account of their spiritual experience.” Thus infant baptism is a plea for admission to the Eucharist without an experience,—a favourite argument with writers on National Establishments. There can be no difficulty in reconciling these things, but on the false supposition that the Lord’s supper demands *only* the same requisites as baptism;—then, indeed, their harmony would be like an attempt to unite the Poles. Will Mr. G—, on reviewing his argument, persevere in this? If not, where is the incongruity of which he complains? Tho’ admitted, as holy, to the initiatory rite of Baptism, they are not considered as *regenerate*, but as dedicated to God; except he will agree with our Antipædobaptist brethren, in making faith and regeneration essential to that ordinance.

It is not a little singular, that, tho' he aims a blow at their system, by affirming that persons educated as Christians, have no claim to baptism, from "precept, precedent, or analogy," (2) yet in his argument for more easy admission to full communion, he unwarily advances the grand plea for their cause. They reason that baptism invariably claims the same requisites as the Lord's supper; and he asks, "what then is more likely to be inferred, than that the *same* terms on which we admit to the Lord's supper, should be required for admission to Baptism?" Were we to allow this *disputable* position in reference to Adults, which is his first application of it; what analogy has it to the case of *infants*, or how can it prove their baptism inconsistent with our requisition from Adults of an experience in the Lord's supper? To reason on infant baptism in the same manner as on that of Adults, the latter being radically different; produces endless confusion, by incessantly changing the question in dispute. Such a dexterous moving of scenes, performed with superior contrivance, makes

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(2) *Evang. Mag.* for 1817, p. 472.

Mr. G— impute to Pædobaptist, congregational Churches, those inconsistencies which have, in fact, no existence. The charge of inconsistency belongs rather to his own system; for as he *universally* claims the same requisites for baptism as for the Lord's supper, he must admit *infants* to both or to none.

Pursuing the same species of reasoning, he contends, that those should partake of the Eucharist as clean, who are baptized as holy; so that the fair, irresistible conclusion is, that regeneration is essential to both institutions, or to neither. If universally necessary to baptism, why does he plead so powerfully for the baptism of infants? Are they regenerated? Why would he administer baptism to those who, for some years, cannot be supposed to understand it; if, as he argues, it be *universally* designed as the means of forming the Christian character? To be consistent, should he not defer their baptism, at least, till their minds can comprehend it's meaning, and intention. His notions seem to abolish just distinctions between infant baptism, and that of Adults; and by practising the former, he certainly opposes his own Theory. If any be excluded

from the Eucharist, merely because unclean, i. e. unregenerate, we ask again where is the contradiction charged upon Independents, except on the Antipædobaptist principle, that baptism implies regeneration? The imposing fallacy of his argument lies, in using the words “unclean” and “holy”, in direct *opposition*; whereas, however they are opposed in many other parts of Scripture, they have not, as applied to this subject, the least contrariety: for the uncleanness, or unregeneracy, which debars from one ordinance, is no contrast to the holiness, or dedication to God, which admits to the other.

Mr. G—’s argument, managed with no small ingenuity, proceeds entirely on a false construction of the Apostle’s saying, “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband. Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.” That this passage may have consistent meaning, the holiness of these children must be the same as the sanctification of the unbelieving husband, or wife, who is sanctified by union with a believing partner;—without this, the Apostle’s reasoning can have

no force. But, certainly, regeneration, or true Christianity, is not intended in these cases; for no such relative union can confer *them*. Mr. G— argues, that those admitted to baptism as holy, should partake of the Eucharist as clean; and as holiness here applies to unbelievers, along with their offspring, when one party is truly pious, he must, according to his system, admit *unbelieving* Adults to baptism;—consequently to the Lord's supper; for his own words may be retorted exactly in their original meaning, “Why should we exclude from one privilege, as unclean, those whom, as holy, we have admitted to that which is initiatory to it?”

If we view this subject in reference to Adult *proselytes*, it still appears, that the requisites for the Eucharist are not equally necessary for baptism; for as a man may be a proselyte from any religion to Christianity, and yet be unclean, i. e. unregenerate, he may consistently be excluded on that account, from one privilege, while as holy, i. e. professedly dedicated to God, he may be fully admitted to another. Mere proselytism is not regeneration, any more than baptism can be so. Mr G— rests much

of his scheme on his *supposed* universal admission to the Eucharist, in the Apostolic age, of *all* proselytes from Judaism or Paganism;—this disputable point is his “chief corner-stone.” Yet, were we to allow all he says, it will not follow that the two institutions claim equal requisites; for Proselytes, when truly converted, received the Lord’s supper, not because holy, i. e. dedicated to God; but as not unclean, i. e. not unregenerated: so that there can be no impropriety in excluding unregenerated *Adults* from one institution, who are admitted to the other, except on the false supposition that baptism implies regeneration. If, as BUTLER says, “baptism, though revealed under the Christian dispensation, be founded in that natural religion” (4) which the Scriptures imply; we wonder with Mr. G— why TAHEITANS, if renouncing idolatry, and “steadfast in doctrine and prayer,” are not baptized; tho’ our prudent Missionaries may have very ample, justifiable reasons; not generally known, for delaying their full communion.

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(4) See this subject considered, and applied to the important cause of Missions, at the close of these strictures, in the Essay No. X.

That there can be no inconsistency in the practice for which we contend, appears from the scriptural distinction of the Christian Church into visible, and invisible; or rather, into nominal and real;—a distinction which has existed from the earliest ages, and which Mr. G— must allow, if “persons orthodox in their opinions, as well as blameless in their external deportment, may nevertheless be *utterly* destitute of personal and experimental piety.” This is an echo of our Lord’s declaration;—“every branch *in me* that beareth not fruit, he taketh away.” They are “in him” *visibly* by profession, tho’ not *vitally* by Grace. Who constitute this visible Church, unless nominal believers, with their infant seed, be thus designated? If, in this sense, they be of the church, baptism belongs to them, as such; but the Lord’s supper, even on Mr. G’s principles, cannot be their claim, because they are evidently unregenerated. To such characters, clearly defined, he surely would not *knowingly* administer it. As nominal Christians, with their infant seed, they claim their baptism, but to the Eucharist they have no just pretensions. Where, then, we beg leave to ask, is the incongruity of not yet granting one privilege to the

unqualified, out of love and faithfulness to their souls, while they are fully admitted to another, which they claim, and are powerfully urged to seek after those requisites which will fit them for all?

The very important question yet remains for our consideration, "*What are the scriptural requisites for the Lord's supper?*" We now inquire for those which authorize a settled residence in some particular Church rather than for those which justify occasional communion. Taking the Holy Oracles for our *rule*, this question will not be difficult to decide; for a point of such vital moment to the interests of Zion, cannot be left in very great obscurity, without impeaching their divine Author; and, that we have an indisputable right to determine for ourselves what his word reveals, must be granted, however human tests may be denied.

(5) Accommodating his system to the present

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(5) The words, "human tests," are, at first sight, objectionable to Dissenters in general, till properly explained as before attempted in these pages; nor would the writer have used them at all, had not Mr. G-- previously made them convey his disapprobation of ALL decision



state of the Christian World, Mr. G— allows and vindicates a departure from Apostolic practice, “in the mode of administering” Baptism and the Lord’s supper; tho’ he is “cautious against *unnecessary* deviation.” (6) But, if we may *knowingly* deviate at all from primitive examples as precedents, where shall we terminate? To allow deviations in the *mode* of administering these ordinances, would authorize them also as to the essential requisites in participants,—this would infer that we have no fixed standard in admissions. The mode, and *formulæ* of the Eucharist, are recorded so explicitly in our Lord’s example, and in his injunc-

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concerning Christian experience, in the admission of Church-members. This made it necessary to refute his application of the phrase, in the only sense in which he can be rationally supposed to use it. If he mean a RULE of judgment, his labour to oppose human tests was needless; as no Independent would contend with him about this interpretation. If he mean the RIGHT of judgment itself, it was essential to the honour of Congregational Churches, that his mistake, in denying that right, should be detected. If he mean NEITHER of these,—the phrase becomes a solecism in his pages.

(6) Evang. Mag. for 1817. p. 471.

tions to his followers, that a *wilful* departure can never be justified. Mr. G—'s aim in pleading for variations in *mode* seems to be, that his readers may be less surprised to infer, that similar variations are justifiable in the *requisites* for the ordinance. If this be not his motive, his remarks are wholly foreign to his subject,—he pleads in his papers not for modes, but for requisites, and to argue from the former to the latter would be “passing strange.” Essential requisites are of such vast importance to the Honour of God, and of Religion, that any departure from known scripture rule must produce most fatal consequences.

Every friend to vital religion admits, that, what Primitive Christians were, in their several societies, all candidates should be as near as possible. *Union* was their grand, peculiar feature,—unity in sentiment, feeling, and conduct. On this essential principle, *all* societies, whether civil, or sacred, are necessarily built; and to suppose them capable of duration, or even of existence, without such a basis, is to insult the human understanding. Primitive Churches “continued stedfastly in the Apostles’ *doctrine*, and fellowship. Now I beseech

“ you, brethren,—that ye all speak the same  
“ thing, and that there be no divisions among  
“ you; but that ye be *perfectly* joined together  
“ in the same mind, and in the same judgment.  
“ For ye are yet *carnal*: for whereas there is  
“ envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not  
“ carnal, and walk as *Men*? I beseech Euo-  
“ dias and Syntyche, that they be of the same  
“ mind in the Lord.” Such were the spirited  
reproof, and expostulation of the Apostle Paul,  
with those who being admitted on fair preten-  
sions, had doubtless “ a belief in the Scriptures,”  
and, so far as we know, exemplary morals also;  
but had falsified, and forfeited their creditable  
membership, by wanting a general unity in sen-  
timent. Among other things, as appears from  
the prevailing errors of the Church of Corinth,  
doctrine made a considerable figure in their  
contentions. To suppose them quarrelling  
merely about the gifts, popularity, and quali-  
fications of their Preachers, will not justify the  
Apostle’s severe censure; as divisions in senti-  
ment on this head, unless attended with some-  
thing more obnoxious, would be comparatively  
harmless. Tho’ they preached not different  
doctrine, their several partizans *supposed* they  
did, and contended accordingly. Hence one

says, "I am of Christ," in opposition to others who are *not* of him; and Paul asks, "Is Christ divided?" Concerning the gifts, labours, and acceptance of ministers, there will always be division, nor is the thing itself unjustifiable, when the passions are not inflamed; but, as to scriptural views of the Saviour's character, there should be only *one* opinion. If, with some Critics, we were to allow, that doctrine had no concern in these dissensions; the argument would still be in our favour: for if angry controversies about the general qualifications of Ministers indicate a carnal condition, much more do they prove it when arising from opposition in doctrinal views of essential truth.

The same Apostle says to the Philippians, "Stand fast in *one* spirit, with *one* mind, striving together for the *faith* of the Gospel." How could they do this without first being *one* in that faith? Such a coalescence must also have some *specific* Truths as it's professed object, not resting in generals, undefined, and uncertain,—in other words, it should refer to *Essentials*. To the churches of Galatia, he says, "There be some that trouble you, and " would pervert the Gospel of Christ. I would

“ they were even *cut off* which trouble you.” These disturbers were not infidels, denying the Gospel of Christ, but wished, as DR. DODD-RIDGE says, “to incorporate the law with Christianity,” and thus to subvert the doctrine of Justification by Faith alone. Their general morals are not censured; so that it should seem, they had all Mr. G—’s requisites, viz. “a belief in scripture, and an external deportment accordingly,” excepting their contentions,—yet they are to be *cut off*. For what? For want of unity in the faith. Rules for exclusion are, by contrast, rules for admission. Mr. G—, indeed, excludes for heresy; but as he admits all who have a belief in scripture, provided they be not immoral, we are left to infer that *his* heretics must first be absolute Infidels!

The holy scriptures state more explicitly, what sentiments are essential to salvation; and, by inference, requisite to communion. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the *truth is not in us*. Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is

“*none of his.* Except ye eat the flesh of the  
 “ Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no  
 “ life in you. Before Abraham was, I AM. If  
 “ ye believe not that, I AM, ye shall die in your  
 “ sins. Therefore the Jews sought the more  
 “ to kill him, because he not only had broken  
 “ the sabbath, but said also that God was his  
 “ Father, making himself *equal with God.*  
 “ Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the *Son*  
 “ *of God,* God dwelleth in him, and he in God.  
 “ Whatsoever is *born of God* overcometh the  
 “ world. Who is he that overcometh the world,  
 “ but he that believeth that Jesus is the *Son of*  
 “ *God?*” (7) These important passages, when  
 compared in their several connexions, clearly  
 assert, or fully infer, the depravity of Man, the  
 renewing influences of the Spirit, the way of  
 salvation by faith in Christ alone, and the

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(7) The appellation, “I AM,” derived from the Old  
 Testament, is peculiar to Deity. The same may be said  
 of the expression, “SON OF GOD,” when applied to Christ  
 in the above extracts. No critical prowess, however  
 daring, learned, or acute, has yet overthrown this inter-  
 pretation. The cavilling Jews, when charging our Lord  
 with blasphemy, doubtless understood him, AS SO USING  
 the latter appellation; and as he pointedly repels the  
 charge, without at all contradicting their views of the

*Supreme Deity* of the Saviour, as essential truths, to deny which seems incompatible with godliness. Holiness has always claimed scriptural truth as it's genuine source, in connexion with the energies of the Sacred Spirit; nor is it possible for the heart to be purified but by Faith.

In religion, Man is impelled by *motives*; without which the system is neither desirable, practicable, or rational. All such motives imply sentiment as their basis, and we are expected to give "a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness, and with fear;"—without such reason, religion becomes blind superstition. Many a humble, sincere Christian can state such reasons but very imperfectly; yet, as they have existence, others often perceive them bet-

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phrase, we must infer that he SO MEANT it. He peremptorily denies their accusation, not by renouncing the title, or their interpretation of it, for he admits both,---yet he pleads NOT GUILTY. It greatly behoves those who disclaim his Supreme Divinity, to do more than has yet been done, either to wipe off the blasphemy, or to let it remain as a blemish upon the Saviour's character, or candidly to acknowledge, that, in this famous dispute with the Jews, he "thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

ter than himself. Divine truth, when embraced by faith, is the grand, essential stimulus to obedience, love, and purity, as appears from the history of the Patriarchs, Apostles, and Martyrs of old. The Gospel is “the power of God” unto salvation, and “effectually worketh in them that believe.” Nor can any genuine peace, or solid comfort exist, but as derived from the doctrines of Divine Grace as revealed in the Holy Bible, which was “written for our learning, that we through patience, and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.” The sacred Spirit is our Comforter, by leading us “into all truth;”—by taking of the things of Christ, and shewing them unto us. Therefore, to be indifferent to sentiment is the greatest injury to religion; obscuring it’s brightest glories, and directly tending to blot the Sun of Righteousness out of the moral system; which, being destitute of light, purity, and happiness, would then present a dreary waste, with only “darkness visible.” Could this be effected, the world would appear more gloomy than those awful regions where the light of truth does shine and is confessed, though it be surrounded with “the blackness of darkness for ever.”



In primitive ages, “the multitude of them  
“that believed were of one heart, and of one  
“soul,”—having a similarity in religious *feelings*. “Nevertheless, whereto we have already  
“attained, let us walk by *the same* rule, let us  
“mind *the same* thing.” Here is unity in conduct. From all the above passages taken together, we obtain the requisites for Church-communion,—unity in doctrine, feeling, and practice; for what Primitive Churches actually were, and what an inspired Apostle wished them to be, must needs be the standard of admission; without which, religious societies would resemble the heterogeneous materials of Nebuchadnezzar’s visionary image; and, from a thousand causes, they might become as “the chaff upon the Summer threshing-floor.” Candidates should possess a *general* similarity of sentiment with that Church where they seek admission,—sentiment, which, as a voluntary society, they have previously embraced as the dictates of an enlightened conscience. *Perfect* uniformity in any Church cannot be expected, unless in *Essentials*; and, in them there may be shades of variation; but, what a Church believes as absolute *Essentials*, she has a right to expect in admissions, or the honours of con-

science, and the sacred privilege of private judgment, must be abandoned,—the principles of divine truth must become a cypher. When specifying the requisites for Church-communion, all essentials lie in a very narrow compass, if *five* non-essential points fully characterize, and distinguish two opposite, powerful denominations; and every candid mind makes the former as few, and the latter as many, as integrity will suffer. If we err at all, let us err on the side of charity; but, *wilful* error should have another name, which we do not wish to pronounce. If a Christian deny these *five points* in their Calvinistic sense, he may surely sit down as an occasional communicant with those who hold them in that meaning; provided he, as a member elsewhere, agree with them in those essentials intimately connected with the salvation of the soul; though prudence, piety, and the important duty of following peace with all Men, should lead him to associate chiefly with that particular Church, whose sentiments he more extensively embraces,—to whom he most properly belongs.

Mr. G— contents himself with a general belief in Scripture, which is so easy to profess, and

allows of such unbounded latitude, as to admit all the most discordant sentiments imaginable into the same peculiar Church; so that his community could not be "of one mind" even in Essentials,—of course, it could not be scriptural. *Some* essentials must be requisite for communion, or all religious associations would be at an end,—the church of Christ would be lost among the Millions of Mankind; like the waters of a river poured into the boundless Ocean. Indeed, his system appears so generalizing, as eventually to destroy all sentiment whatever, by reducing it to a mere nothing; and it endeavours to effect a religious union of hearts, where there is little, if any, previous union in faith. This, from the nature, and well-known laws of the human mind, is necessarily impossible. Primitive churches were of "one heart," and of "one soul," because united "steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine;" and the historic page abundantly shows, that their departure from purity in the faith produced discord, violence, and ruinous confusion. The pleasing union of different Christian societies in our day, in which we participate with such unspeakable pleasure, arises from an approximation in sentiment; and that union, however far it may

appear to go, is only *commensurate* with such approximation. As *this* advances, so will the union; for it is the peculiar character of the glorious Millenium, when love and concord will universally abound, that “knowledge shall be increased.” In promoting such grand objects, let us instantly sacrifice at the shrine of a liberal charity; party-spirit, party-names, bigotry, austerity, prejudice, self-interest, all minor distinctions, all unholy, unsocial tempers, and every *iota* not intimately connected with the real honour, integrity, and eternal safety of Man; but, to sacrifice truth,—pure, essential, sacred, immortal, immutable truth,—would be “an abomination to the Lord.”

Should a candidate agree with any Christian society in their essentials, as fixed by themselves, (others having no right to interfere) he has *one* requisite as a member with *them*. To propose, as a *sine qua non*, a Church creed, in a long string of sentiments, many of them, perhaps, very remotely connected with human happiness, is highly revolting to the mild genius of the peaceful Gospel; and it would be extremely difficult, if not wholly impossible, to prove, that any doctrines are absolutely essential to

full communion, but those specified in a former page, or the important truths deducible from them by implication, or by inference. Other things are glorious, but these *exceed* in glory.

Sentiment *alone* being no evidence of pure religion, candidates should also possess similar *feelings*, and be of "one heart" and of "one soul," with the society to which they join. In feelings, by far the most essential part of Christianity, there is much more uniformity among good men, than in any thing else; and to this chiefly we should look as the surest, and most important test. This is the more needful, because, in Mr. G—'s papers, this part of religion, though forming it's greatest glory, is not at all noticed. Those who have "passed from death unto life," have generally the same religious convictions, fears, hopes, joys, sorrows, doubts, anxieties, and struggles in their spiritual warfare. Hence, at our Missionary Anniversaries, when different denominations, like the various tribes of Israel, repair to the same temple, to enjoy a grand Sacramental festival; *one feeling* absorbs all their several distinctions; and destitute of *this*, a religious society resembles a vast, full-peopled cemetery, where

lifeless *bodies* dwell in gloomy silence. It is the world of *materiality*;—spirits go elsewhere. To admit any into a particular Church, whose feelings have no accordance with those already there, is to send wolves among the flock of Christ; the very design of such a society would be utterly defeated; its honour tarnished; its union broken; its safety endangered; its ruin certain.

Christian experience is most intimately connected with *the human passions*, where lies its proper seat; and by them it is generally expressed in the Scriptures. As the passions, considered as natural powers abstractedly, are much the noblest part of Man, in which he most resembles his Maker;—a religion which should discard, or overlook *them* cannot be divine; and in proportion as they are under the mighty control of true religion, we become holy, honorable, happy, and useful. The sacred Word lays the greatest stress upon *them*, and is our only sure guide, where mistakes are common, and often fatal. “Serve the Lord with *fear*,  
“and rejoice with trembling. Happy is the  
“Man that *feareth* always. Work out your  
“own salvation with *fear* and trembling. Bles-

“sed are they that *mourn*, for they shall be  
 “comforted. Godly *sorrow* worketh repent-  
 “ance. Rejoice in *hope* of the glory of God.  
 “We glory in tribulations also; knowing that  
 “tribulation worketh patience; and patience.  
 “experience; and *experience, hope*. Whom  
 “having not seen, ye love; in whom, though  
 “now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice  
 “with *joy unspeakable*, and full of glory. Re-  
 “joice in the Lord always: and again I say  
 “*rejoice*. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour:  
 “therefore *love* is the fulfilling of the law.  
 “Though I speak with the tongues of Men  
 “and of Angels, and have not *charity*, I am  
 “become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cym-  
 “bal;—I am nothing. Now abideth faith,  
 “hope, *charity*, these three; but the greatest  
 “of these is charity. If any man *love* not the  
 “Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema.  
 “Maran-atha.”

How are genuine religious affections to be ascertained? Mr. G—is positive that “the state of the mind” can only be known to men by the outward profession and conduct. These *alone* are no evidence for or against; for he allows, that “persons orthodox in their opinions, and blameless in conduct, may yet be wholly des-

“titude of personal and experimental piety.” After all, how can it be known whether the feelings of a candidate be, or be not, similar to the Church’s where he seeks admission? Truly, by an account from himself, or through the medium of another. In the latter way, Barnabas proposed Saul of Tarsus to the disciples, urging principally on his behalf, “how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him.” As Mr. G— rests much on Scripture precedents, this should have it’s due weight. Very often, the most satisfactory experience is given in a private conversation with a pastor, or deacons; who, when candidates are too timid, or incapable of giving it in any other way, report it to the Church. In a similar manner, it is presumed, Mr. G— would ascertain that “belief in scripture,” which he demands as requisite; and, as to *morals*, he could know them only from his own observation, or the report and *testimony* of others. Why, then, does he so much object to giving an experience, since feelings are as *much* cognizable as sentiment, and claim *more* attention. We contend not for the *mode* of giving such an account, nor for the extent of particulars, nor that candidates should personally appear at all in public,



when it is given in; but in some way it should be done, or we cannot properly, to full satisfaction, ascertain whether they possess the most essential part of religion—experience.

Social prayer, indeed, when a gift is exercised, will often elicit spiritual views, and feelings, in a very remarkable manner; for as DR. OWEN says, “a man’s real sentiments are best known from his prayers,” because, then, his whole heart is poured out unawares; and different Christian denominations resemble each other most in their petitions. Private prayer, when accidentally overheard, has sometimes struck the wicked dumb, by surprising them into a consciousness of divine things; and, as in the well known case of the praying MR. INCE, a social gift has betrayed a man’s superior knowledge and piety. Prayer was given by God himself, as evidence that Saul of Tarsus was truly converted; and it is not so much the manner, or the frequency, as the *matter* of our petitions, that indicates “the state of the mind.” The proud, boasting, unrenewed Pharisee, who went up to the temple to pray, had “a belief in scripture,” and was externally clean, as the burnished “cup and platter;”

but, Alas ! his prayer betrayed his hypocrisy ; and that of the poor, self-condemned publican, evinced his own genuine religion. If there is a *general* coincidence in views, and feelings, which will always be, when piety is real, let no Christian Church reject any Candidate, provided his temper and his conduct adorn his profession ;—if *feeling* be right, the rest cannot be far wrong. Mr. G— is not blamable for placing outward profession and conduct among other evidences of real conversion ; but for making them sufficient proof of themselves,—the *only ones* which we can obtain, or have a right to desire. Had he merely said, that *some* institutions do not imply, in participants, the previous formation of Christian character ; but that one, viz. the Lord's supper, does demand such a requisite ; these strictures upon his system had not appeared.

And, after all that has now been advanced, with the purest, and most friendly intentions ; I can most cheerfully allow, that, had Mr. G—, whose papers are written in a truly Christian spirit, been aware of the consequences fairly resulting from his theory, it had never been divulged. Also, I should be exceedingly sorry,

if any readers of these pages should hastily infer from my remarks, which, in attempting to do justice to this momentous subject, are necessarily plain, close, and free; that Mr G— is purposely indifferent to the true spirit of vital Christianity, or less worthy of our general esteem and regard. The disposition, and the piety of an Author, and the inferences from his system, are two things;—frequently as opposite as light and darkness.

It is not a pleasing task; perhaps, not without some *hazard*, to controvert the opinion of a man of learning, talent, and amiable disposition; but (setting aside the desired, honourable consistency of that denomination of Christians, whom he seems to censure,) when vital Christianity, and the general credit of religion are at stake, it is, even in their weakest advocates, a crime to be silent.

Carefully, and impartially reviewing the whole, we cannot but consider Mr. G—'s papers as calculated to enlarge a door of admission to full communion, which, we fear, has been already too wide. His "very numerous and deplorable disappointments," where he had sanguine

hopes, seem to oppress him much, as they would any one who had a similar experience; but, if we may judge from the most distressing case of **PRESIDENT EDWARDS**, who fell a lamentable prey to all the terrible consequences of such a system; a practical trial of it will press upon him hereafter with the weight of **ATLAS**. Those very disappointments which make him *less* scrupulous, have made others *more* so; and why such heart-rending disasters should *decrease* his cautions, is more ænigmatical than were the Sibylline leaves when scattered by the wind.

On superficial examination, Mr. G-'s scheme may appear to many, novel, and attractive; but, so far as full communion is concerned, it has, especially across the Atlantic, been scrupulously "weighed in the balances and found wanting." (8) It may invite, originate, and

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(8) In England, this subject was very amply discussed about the middle of the seventeenth century, on both sides of the question. The Rev. H. Saunders, and the Rev. P. Goodwin, two ejected ministers, were for restricted communion, on liberal terms; and W. Morice, Esq. for open admission to all, as he says, "having a

hasten a general profession of religion, forcing it with artificial stimulants, like plants in a hot-house; but, is it not also highly favourable to imposition and hypocrisy? Though we lament as much as he, to see “three fourths or more of a congregation withdraw from the Lord’s supper” when a Sermon is closed; we recollect that it is not essential to their final salvation. He must consider it otherwise, if it be “*no less obligatory than prayer and praise.*” This would bear hard upon great numbers, whose conscientious scruples overcome their resolu-

dogmatical faith, and not being scandalous.” Mr. Saunders’ work I never saw; but in a vacation-ramble, last Midsummer, I picked up the other performances; after my remarks on the subject had been put to the press. I have considered Mr. Morice’s work with no ordinary attention; and it requires not a little, patiently to peruse so much learned labour. The book, which has greatly confirmed my present views, is highly curious, and entertaining, though composed in a dry, crabbed, metaphysical style, and filled with too copious extracts from the Fathers, and the Schoolmen. His super-abundant allusions are often strikingly original, and humorous; sometimes exciting our risibles to much more than a smile. He abounds to a tiresome excess, with Latinisms, and Grecisms, according to the fashion of that day. What is most remarkable, is, that he has carried ALL Mr. Great-

tion, and of whose eternal safety, no candid mind can reasonably doubt; so that though Mr. G—'s tenderness appears in one instance, it vanishes in more. Strict adherence to Scripture-rule, even when combined with all possible sympathy and encouragement, may deter *some* from seeking a place at the Lord's table;—this will be *their* fault, not chargeable upon others. Laxity may allure, and deceive thousands unfit for admission;—then the *Churches* are guilty.

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heed's arguments to their utmost length; and says all that can be said on his side of the controversy, accompanied with deep learning, a ready wit, and the enlargements of a quarto. Mr. Palmer, in his Nonconformist's memorial, supposes Mr. Saunders to answer Mr. Morice; (this might possibly be a rejoinder) but the latter entitles his work "CÆNA QUASI KÖINIÏ: the new inclosures broken  
 "down, and the Lord's supper laid forth in common for all  
 "Church-members, having a dogmatical faith, and not  
 "being scandalous: in a DIATRIBE, and defence thereof:  
 "against the apology of some ministers, and godly peo-  
 "ple, (as their own mouth praiseth them) asserting the  
 "lawfulness of their administering the Lord's supper in  
 "a select company: lately set forth by their Prolocutor,  
 "Mr. Humphrey Saunders. Written by William Mo-  
 "rice of Werrington, in Devon, Esq."

In an age when a general, and alarming degradation of morals, is unjustly ascribed to the general profession of religion; all Christian communities owe it, as a sacred duty to themselves, to the world, and to Jesus Christ; conscientiously to decide, whether they will adopt those measures calculated to promote their purity, peace, and long duration; or those which, under the specious pretext of swelling their numbers, will inevitably work their downfall, and their ruin. Fired, as they now are, with a laudable, unexampled, yet increasing zeal for the Divine Glory, the salvation of souls, and the general happiness of Mankind;—anxiously looking for the most glorious “days of the Son of Man,” when every knee shall bow to him;—surrounded with the auspicious “signs of the times,” powerfully aiding their mighty conquests;—elevated in the scale of society, as “the joy of the whole earth,” to outlive the dreadful shocks of time;—let them constantly regard a voice always speaking from Heaven; “—BE YE HOLY, AS I THE LORD YOUR GOD AM HOLY.”

*End of the Thoughts on Church-Communion.*





## Miscellaneous Essays.



### No. I. *On Writing of Essays.*

**T**HIS long-established practice has done much to entertain, to enlighten, and to improve Mankind. When undertaken by superior talents strongly tainted with moral impurities, the work has produced infinitely more harm than good; for, of all poisons, that which destroys the mind is most dreadful, nor is the pill any safer for being gilded. But, the papers of writers like ADDISON, JOHNSON, KNOX, and many others engaged in the cause of Virtue, will find readers so long as their language endures,—they painted for Eternity.

From the liberal encouragement often given to this species of writing, we may infer its high popularity; public sanction being always the standard of public opinion: and, at this moment, well-written essays will make their way where bulky volumes would be rejected. In our day, for many reasons besides their un-

wieldy form, huge folios become unfashionable, having no chance of being soiled except by dust, worms, or time. This does not necessarily evince low attainments in knowledge, or any aversion to mental improvement in readers; nor proves that essay-writers inevitably possess a barren genius, very limited acquirements, or any incapacity for more elaborate performances. The same hand which produced the **RAMBLER**, gave us the copious **Dictionary of the English language**,—one of the wonders of the world.

There are minds naturally formed for shorter compositions by large excursions into the boundless regions of knowledge; which without noticing every minute object, or overlooking any thing of importance, exhibit a rich, judicious selection of whatsoever is beautiful, and worthy of remembrance. Jewels must be sought to be obtained;—polished, to appear brilliant; and well set, that their lustre may charm. True genius will arrange in a small compass all that another puts into a volume: leaving those ramifications found in large works, to be readily supplied by readers of discernment, when the stamina of a system are furnished; as painters find their work easy, when a correct outline is drawn.

To make known truth, especially to some, we must concentrate our evidence, like rays in a focus; and a comprehensive essay arrests attention, and convinces the judgment, where long deductions, and far-fetched reasonings, miss their aim. Numberless subjects call for very accurate, and full discussion; but it is the humour of many to suspect the *truth* of a proposition when great pains are taken to establish it; whereas, when arguments are placed like a battalion, in close and formidable array, conquest and triumph often follow. This is mournfully evident in those deep impressions, durable as life, made by obnoxious papers, where a formal treatise would have failed. Not every branch of knowledge demands, or allows of copious enlargement; for so narrow are the utmost boundaries of human science, that, on some topics, the most fertile minds can furnish only an essay, if the axiom in metaphysics be true,—that there is a point to which our ideas of a subject may proceed,—beyond which they cannot go; because, then, any addition to our Knowledge is impossible. And, if “expression is the dress of thought,” there are also appropriate *words* in which alone a subject can appear to advantage.

Essays from the pens of the virtuous, being, from their powerful moral tendency, an open declaration of war, and an active invasion against the "prince of darkness," are justly formed on Horace's maxim, that "Rules should be short;" and a smart attack upon any particular vice, managed with prudent dexterity, proves far more effectual than a professed logical dispute; as fortifications are oftener taken by bold stratagems of surprise, than by all the orderly plans of a siege. Indolence is the failing of many who would yet be thought knowing. To peruse volumes is, to them, so irksome, that numbers will remain ignorant rather than attempt it, who, when reading is at all their whim, resemble the Lapland Rein-deer, bounding with the utmost speed, impatient till his journey is finished. Others are involved in a multiplicity of cares very different from learned anxieties, and so incessantly employed in acquiring worldly treasures, as to have little time for seeking those of the mind. Thousands, whose gratification is nevertheless to be consulted, are unable to purchase any thing which is not brief, and at a moderate price. To the lazy, the busy, and even the learned; short effusions become needful, desirable, and advanta-

geous. An indolent man, in his weary moments, may summon sufficient courage to read without distraction, a paper driving away the *ennui* of life; and a sickly valetudinarian upon his couch, or easy chair, whose habits of reading make him uneasy without a book, may promote his health by drinking, at his leisure, the waters of HELICON. Should he stroll into his garden, or into his fields; or breathe the air in his chariot, or on his lakes; a few words from the Muses may tranquillize his nerves, by gently fixing his thoughts on some object; and by insensibly heightening the charms of nature, they may fill him with the most delightful sensations. If he be a literary man, prone to excessive thought through the overwhelming impulse of his own intellect, buried in deep, abstracted reasonings, or honourably toiling at the *drudgery* of science; he finds an amusing, laconic paper necessary to recreate his mind, by exciting the play of fancy when reason is fatigued; and he seizes such a gratification with avidity, as a soothing remedy against severe application. It is his *substitute* for the coarse jollity of vulgar mirth, the transitory pleasures of wine, and the stimulating viands of sensuality. Also the bustling, and the giddy,

just on the point of being ruinously whirled into the *vortices* of worldly scenes, may thus relax, or fix their attention, by informing their minds without injuring their interests, or their happiness; and the enlightened poor may read an essay calculated to make them wise and good; without the imaginary danger of disturbing the tranquillity of empires.

## No. II.

*Human Endowments without True Religion.*

**H**OW many professors of religion have only “the form of godliness !” Some of them, viewed as Men, possess all which can render them amiable, or their society a valuable acquisition. Those who regard only natural qualities, consider them as having reached perfection ; nor can they conceive, how any additional excellencies could render them more useful, or more worthy of our admiration, and applause. But such as maintain, that, *holiness reigning in the heart*, is essential to constitute a truly good man ; perceive in them a lamentable defect, for which the finest endowments of Nature cannot atone.

MISIS is a man of most gentle manners. His natural good-humour, and open friendship, deliver us, at once, from all fears of unjustly exciting his frowns, and the displeasing mortification of having our foibles circulated in other companies ;—“ he backbiteth not with his tongue.” When occasionally among boisterous, and clashing spirits, his unshaken equa-

nimity is astonishing; and his mildness under the most cruel scourges of the tongue, appears like "the patience of the saints." With the cries of distress, he is more deeply wounded than many others are; and his sympathy seems a transformation into the very character, circumstances, and persons of sufferers. Like the good Samaritan, he is moved, when others are insensible; his heart contains certain strings which strike *all* the chords of human woe. No one contradicts, or accuses him of boasting, when he says, "I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a Father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not, I searched out. The blessing of him that was ready to perish, came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy."

All who know him, witness his integrity as a man of business. Instead of a talent for imposition, as his *primum mobile* in commerce, he disdains every deceitful artifice, being a public example of universal integrity, laudable motives, and a uniform conduct. He trembles at the mere sight and name of false balances, weights, and measures; and riches obtained by unjust speculations, to the ruin of his neigh-



hours, fill him with uneasiness and regret. As a member of society, his soul abhors every species of immorality,—condemning in strongest terms all approaches to indecency, or, with an indignant frown, banishing the profane from his presence.

As a professor of the Gospel, his character assumes still greater dignity; for as his knowledge of religion is considerable, he practices it's general duties with such punctuality, as shows that he has *some* feeling of their importance. Occasional animosities in the Churches of Christ he bewails; and, tho' not a member himself, his accidental advice, his purse, and even his occasional prayers, are at the public call. In one word;—as a man of most exquisite feelings, every thing connected with the welfare, or the injury of mortals, makes strong impressions on his heart; and he seems like a faithful centinel, as the guardian of the world, habitually prepared by inclination, and a sense of duty, to avert every danger; as also to discover, and to accomplish, whatever might promote the happiness of Man.

Yet, strange as it may appear to *some*, this

Man is *not* a real Christian. His disposition, however amiable as the gift of Nature, is not “the heart of stone” made “the heart of flesh.” Tho’ his conduct be a lesson of patience, and benevolence; it is a lesson, which, properly speaking, he can scarcely be said to have learnt;—more the result of instinct, intuition, or imperceptible imitation, than of teaching, or of diligence. Education may have contributed to make him what he is; but such is his natural temperament both of body, and of mind, that distress, and good or evil, operate upon him *mechanically*;—in this branch of his character, he is a child of STERNE’S. Not feeling in himself much to oppose, he goes on smoothly in mere natural religion, requiring only natural abilities, and assistance, having his skies always bright; while the real godly man must fight his way against morose passions, and deeply-rooted habits, rendered powerful by long indulgence before conversion, and which no mere human resistance can possibly subdue;—his very stubborn “fallow ground” is to be broken up.

MITIS has “a good report of them that are without;” but his morality is the effect of a con-

science owing much of it's tenderness to the presence, the inspection, or the fear of Man. Could we, in his secret walks, read the midnight of his soul, we should find him a slave to some hidden lust, from which kind nature had not granted exemption; and a survey of his inmost "chambers of imagery," would discover *self* as the grand spring of all his actions, enthroned as an Idol in his breast. His piety, if such it must be called, is the effort of the man,—not the powerful exercise of spiritual affections, irresistibly conquering the soul. His knowledge of sacred things, results merely from his own mental exertions as a *theorist*; consisting chiefly in cold, dry, insipid speculations, very different from the genial warmth of "the day-spring from on high;" though probably as a Biblical critic, he may, in his department, shine with lustre unrivalled. His conversation, without being censorious, or culpably satirical, dwells wholly on *general* topics;—the oratory of a sermon; the peculiarities of a minister; the rise, progress, success, movements, finances, or aggregate numbers of different religious societies. He is a *historian*, coolly relating bare matters of fact, without improving deductions from them;—a religious

*annalist*, with accurate dates, references, and outline-sketches, like **DOOMSDAY-BOOK**.

His religious attachment is, through all it's operations, a family thing, left as a heir-loom, or legacy, and like them revered; or the ashes of a holy fire which burned in the breasts of his ancestors: but, now, every spark being gone, only the remaining embers just indicate how it once glowed. He seems to be the Parent of the Universe, possessing a benevolence in proportion; yet, he knows not how he attained such a temper; for, excepting natural changes, he has always been the same. When contemplating his character, we find much to admire, to commend, to imitate, and to excite such a feeling as our Lord had for the youth, who lacked only one thing to fit him for the Kingdom of Heaven. In some things, **MIRIS** may outshine others who are stars of magnitude in our Churches; nevertheless, though we abundantly rejoice to behold such an ornament to the world, we feel not the same inward satisfaction, and holy pleasure, as in seeing the Lion changed into a lamb, the leopard cast his spots, and the Ethiopian assume a different appearance. In reviewing a character, so beautifully, so nearly

finished, yet so evidently defective; let all remember that natural endowments, even on the highest scale, are not true religion: and let every genuine Christian thankfully exclaim,—  
“By the grace of God, I am what I am.”

## No. III.

*True Religion without many human Endowments.*

**T**HAT human nature is susceptible of Divine influences, and that real Christians are powerfully changed by the Grace of God; are truths too well supported to be denied, or questioned, where religion is known by experience. These supernatural operations are not a *mere impulse* upon the Mind; but the effects of a living, active principle;—nothing less than Omnipotent, and Eternal;—most essentially different from any other power which can sway the human breast, and infinitely superior in its results. We can find nothing like it, or at all worthy of a comparison, in the highest achievements of education,—the long-acquired habits of mental watchfulness,—the restraints of civil government,—the supposed mellowing effects of affliction,—the temptations of self-interest, and boundless ambition,—the boasted conquests of moral philosophy,—or the mighty influence of worldly maxims, customs, ceremonies, and politeness. These may humanize a brutal savage, polish a rustic, produce a mo-

ralist, reform a rake, or subdue a furious renegade; but their utmost combinations cannot form a genuine Christian. This insufficiency is more particularly evident, in their never impelling the mind by the only motive worthy of a rational being,—the glory of God. This honour, to which Nature cannot, and will not, aspire, is reserved for Religion; and, when actuated by *this* motive, a good Man appears to highest advantage, as the conqueror of himself. So superior are the motives, and powers, belonging exclusively to true Religion; that, to compare them with the utmost capabilities of human genius, is comparing finites with infinites; and presents far greater contrasts than the smallest drop to the Ocean, or an Atom of dust, or a particle of light, to the numberless Myriads of worlds, and the overpowering blaze of glory, which form the boundless system of the Universe.

This powerful change of which we speak, and which the Scriptures emphatically call “a new creature,” is not *physical*;—the mind remaining the same, as a *mind*, though its tendencies, operations, and pursuits, are essentially different: and even this alteration leaves be-

hind so much of "the old man," that the most sanctified, as appears from the history of our Lord's immediate followers, retain certain characteristics prevalent during their unregeneracy; making them appear, on some occasions, very much like the Men of this world. On no other grounds can we account for the Apostle's lamentations,—“For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. Oh! wretched Man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” What are these complaints, but the expressive language of “a new creature,” bewailing the dominion of sin in his own heart, and violently struggling for mastery? A total annihilation of depravity, would leave no room for such holy warfare, or for the development of Christian principles, conquering the natural dispositions of Man.

In every period of time, JEHOVAH has taken a pleasure to select the *vilest* of mankind, to become his “vessels of mercy.” Is it any wonder, then, that, in some who bear the Christian



name, the force of nature, not fully subdued, should sometimes appear, so far as to embolden blasphemers; or to fill the wise and good, with fear and trembling? If a Man be naturally prone to anger; if he be a boaster, envious, unstable, facetious, gloomy, sanguine, or eccentric; regeneration does not instantaneously *abolish* these feelings; for, at certain times, they will show themselves: though an unseen hand, by modifying or restraining them, or by their gradual destruction, manifestly prevents their ruinous influence. Should a "natural man" be happily exempted from such foes, it is not because he has vanquished in fight; for, having never been thus openly assailed, he displays no skill;—knows nothing of warfare, victory, or defeat;—claims no honour, or reward. He cannot join in the *grief* of believers when "sorely smitten" by their enemies; nor in their *joy* when God "causeth them always to triumph in Christ." In *them*, we see, with pleasing wonder, divine principles wrestling "with flesh and blood;"—a contest between Heaven and Hell; in which the Christian, after exhibiting a prowess which worldly heroes cannot show, returns from the field, with flying banners, "more than a conqueror." If sensual

appetites, covetousness, pride, cruelty, or impatience, have prevailed; he resists these, and all other evil propensities, with a power *not his own*; while the carnal Man has nothing wherewith to repel their fierce attacks, but the cold reasonings of human philosophy, influencing the impotent exertions of his own mind;—a barrier utterly insufficient for the purpose.

The superiority of religion appears very great in those holy men who derive very few, if any, advantages from Nature. Their Grace is generally far more than their gifts, or mental endowments: and martyrdom for conscience sake, has been suffered principally by those who moved in the lower spheres of life. When beholding with an extacy of joy, the unexampled patronage given to Religion in our age, by the great, the noble and the royal; we cannot but remark that the cause claims as it's most numerous friends and supporters, “the poor of this world,” or those who have “neither poverty nor riches.” A professing Christian, in exalted life, must shine very brilliantly indeed, before he out-dazzle the worldly splendours by which he is surrounded, and be distinctly visible to common observation. He is a star whose rays

scarcely reach this lower Creation,—often lost in the radiance of less distant orbs,—hailed, when he does appear, with rapture, and with praise. Such as inherit every blessing from Nature, divine grace being superadded, have often been found to possess that Grace in a more limited degree; “for, ye see your calling, “brethren, how that not many wise Men after “the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble “are called. But God has chosen the foolish “things of the world to confound the wise; and “God hath chosen the weak things of the world “to confound the things which are mighty. “How *hardly* shall they that have riches enter “into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for “a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”

A little observation will soon convince us, and Charity should lead us to hope, that a Man of rugged manners, narrow intellect, an uncultivated temper, and naturally morose, may not be an utter stranger to genuine religion, in it's first operations. Diamonds, the most precious, are found enclosed amidst rocks and rubbish, in the mines of GOLCONDA. And if, (to change our comparison) the work of religion

resemble an *engrafture*; why may not scions from the tree of life be introduced with infinite skill, into the most crooked, the hardest, roughest, sourest *crab-stocks* of Mankind, so as eventually to produce all the fruits in the garden of God? On the other hand; a Man may be very finely polished in the schools of the world, to be the child of lust,—the scourge, and the curse of the human species. All these things are abundantly evident, not only from the numerous affabilities of friendship in civilized, enlightened, and polite circles, where pure Christianity does not appear; but also from the very important history of *Missions*; exhibiting the most untutored, and barbarous nations, as savingly converted by the gospel of Christ, still retaining many traces of their former character; yet so amazingly changed, every way for the better, as to astonish the most incredulous, and to confound the most profane. The holy Scriptures, too, faithfully relate the sad falls, and crimes of David, Solomon, Peter, and others; who, nevertheless, were brilliant examples of deep repentance, produced by that Almighty power, which alone could restore such awful backsliders.

Infidelity has sometimes cruelly exulted in the failings of such Men; as if they were evidence for that system, or warranted the inference, that Christianity is not superior in its operations to the religion of nature. But we may with more just triumph reply, that their penitence exhibits a constellation of virtues infinitely surpassing any thing the world can display; and that their very *crimes*, taken in connexion with their *restoration*, are an argument in favour of Christianity, not to be answered. Its records can show innumerable instances of complete restoration from crimes and guilt;—the annals of infidelity—not one. Among the boasting followers of Deism, where shall we find such unaffected devotion, such deep sorrow under convictions of sin, such holy self-aborrence, such universal philanthropy, such strong desires and exertions after moral excellence, as in the history of the Psalmist David, —that very man, who, in his own times, was “the song of the drunkards,” and whom modern freethinkers have so much reviled? Infidels, even when pretending to suffering and *martyrdom* in their cause, and professedly pleading for the holiness of Deity, are not renowned for *purity of morals*; but for plotting

the ruin of empires, after previously producing their moral degradation; so that, if we may judge by operations on the Mind and conduct; "Their God is not our God; our enemies themselves being judges." "Righteousness" alone, or pure Christianity, "exalteth a nation;" being absolutely essential to the true grandeur, the stability, the peace, and the happiness of thrones, and of kingdoms. "Sin is the reproach," and the certain overthrow "of any people."

Thus "undefiled religion," reigning with infinite power in the soul, claims, in it's nature, tendencies, and operations, a divine origin and dignity, superior to the pristine holiness of Paradise; triumphing gloriously in the conquests it has made of "principalities, powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places;" and though wit, banter, and persecution, allied with proud philosophy, may ridicule and oppress; it lives, and shall live, when nature, with all her boast, is laid in ruins.

## No. IV.

*On Discouraging Candidates for the Sacred Ministry.*

**J**EHOVAH propagates, and supports the cause of religion, by a succession of Men, divinely qualified for their Master's work. In all ages, he has given "some, apostles; and "some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and "some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, "for the edifying of the body of Christ." They are generally "moved by the Holy Ghost" in early life; when their minds are expanding, their affections warm, and the parties involved in various connexions with society;—consequently, unavoidable circumstances often form a temporary barrier against a young Man's first introduction to public view. To push himself forward, seems unbecoming; and to wait for encouragement from others is, in some instances, a most painful thing, suspending him in perpetual anxiety between the prudent dictates of modesty, and an overwhelming impulse upon his own mind. This shows the necessity of public-spirited men in our religious

societies, to search out, and to enlist youths of promise, to bear arms in the common cause of Christianity, who shall ultimately become “good soldiers of Jesus Christ.” Does not this duty devolve upon our Pastors and Deacons, or upon those, who, from the long and repeated service they have seen, are *veterans* in warfare? When Saul of Tarsus, being newly converted, preached at Damascus, the patronage of Barnabas brought him into notice:—no very easy matter; considering that the Churches, having long beheld him as the scourge and terror of Mankind, “were all afraid of him; and believed not that he was a disciple.”

It must be granted, that, in this concern, extreme caution should be used; but, under such pretence, we should not hide a criminal negligence operating so unfavourably upon the cause of religion, as to endanger it's welfare, if not it's very existence. “If God mean the “young man for his service, he will put him “into the ministry.” True;—but does such a declaration, made without considering the *means* by which it is to be accomplished, show any real wisdom, friendship, brotherly love, animated zeal, or Christian consistency? Should



the youth, impelled by the powerful dictates of conscience, break his galling chains; censorious minds may say,—“ He is hasty, vain, presumptuous; and should have waited till the tide had favoured him:” whereas, surrounded by difficulties, and oppressed with grief, he has long desired, and expected encouragement, with more eagerness “ than they who watch for the morning.” What strange contradiction! First to maintain, that, without our aid, God will make him what he designs him to be,—then, if the youth, tho’ with much trembling, voluntarily step forth, or boldly dart like a meteor across the skies; blame him for his impatience, temerity, and contempt of public opinion,—amazed and confounded at his unexpected appearance,—confidently predicting, that, like a meteor, he will soon vanish!

As an impediment to his first attempts in the Christian ministry, a candidate often meets with an unusual, and most unaccountable *distance* from his religious intimates; who hear him with prejudice; evidently delighting to expose his faults; showing him, with affected importance, only the dark side of things, without one beam of Sunshine. To correct his

faults, is a duty, and a favour, which a discreet youth knows how to value; but, surely, it may be done without such apparent self-gratification, or such an air of triumph, as either kindles resentment, or extinguishes all those noble and generous feelings essential to emulation, and to excellence. A wise, and skilful surgeon, when probing a wound, or using an amputating knife, combines the firmest resolution, with the finest sympathies. It must be a great mistake to act always on one general principle; not considering the temper, or the circumstances of the party concerned. *All* need not a curb; nor *all* a spur. Who does not see that presumption must be checked, and unassuming worth encouraged? To manifest opposition, or even cold, indifferent neutrality in *all* cases, is not only ungenerous; but exposes us to the sin of “quenching the spirit,” being nothing better than a species of persecution, to do God service. “It is done to abase pride, and to teach the weakness of Man.” Were this always the motive, it would be well; but is it never done more to exalt ourselves, than from a genuine desire to humble others; as **DIOGENES** disdainfully trampled upon the very magnificent furniture, and pride of **PLATO**, with

much greater pride than PLATO'S? Besides, when any have the cruel weakness to make it evident, that they dwell upon our faults merely to bear our spirits down; it most effectually rouses the feelings of arrogance: for we must needs fancy ourselves possessed of some great and enviable talents, otherwise so much pains would not be professedly taken, to prevent our being "exalted above measure."

After all, "our young candidates must learn what they have to encounter, and not run before they be sent. If they be to fill the priest's office, our restraints cannot prevail;—if not; our plain dealing may exclude improper persons, by making them desist." Must, then, persevering opposition always be the test of a Divine call to the ministry? Are none to enter upon this work, if they can possibly be prevented? Have any a delegated right from heaven to fix the fate of beginners,—“to shed ambrosia, or lethe” upon their performances at pleasure? Doubtless, the voice of wise, judicious, and experienced men should be sought, and heard with the greatest reverence, as a guide or monitor; and the actual call of our

churches to preach the gospel *to them*, is a desirable, and a necessary evidence of a call from God: yet much depends upon the manner of conducting this business. There is a cruelty, miscalled by the names of honesty, and faithfulness; which knows not how to act, but by thwarting all the efforts of rising genius, so as to sink them in the dust. Ministers greatly need a prudent share of courage to face large assemblies; but when, in early life, a timid disposition is overborn by supercilious severity, such a sufficient firmness is seldom acquired, though their succeeding eminence and their labours, may become very highly distinguished.

This subject is attended with many delicacies, calling for much wisdom and discretion. Let us anxiously foster our pious youths of promising talent; and, by gentle means, lead them to distinction, and to usefulness, “with the cords of a man, and the bands of love.” Where self-sufficiency abounds, or mental powers are evidently so far wanting, as to give no hope of superiority above the *usual standard* of human intellect; let our opposition be con-

scientific, firm, judicious, and friendly. In this age of mental improvement, and general knowledge, a man of only a common capacity, cannot hope to give much satisfaction in a work which demands all possible energies. Where true religion does not appear, or not in a sufficient degree; let us resolutely close every avenue to the pulpit;—yet without any apparent persecution. But, if an APOLLOS come forward, combining a luxuriant imagination with strong reasoning powers; we ought, like AQUILA and PRISCILLA, affectionately to rectify his mistakes, to improve his knowledge, to sanction his labours. Should one resembling TIMOTHY arise in our churches;—beware of deciding upon his character too soon; and of saying peremptorily what the flower will be, ere it is full blown. Though he does not appear to much advantage just now; a little time may unfold such excellencies as the bud did not promise. When they show themselves, we should, like Paul, exhibit them to the world; and should teach the happy possessor to make the best of his talents. As the wants of our Churches daily increase, and Heathen nations say with ten thousand voices, “Come over

and help us;”—let us, while beseeching God to send more labourers into his harvest, be so far consistent, as speedily to remove every obstacle out of their way.

## No. V.

*On Encouraging Candidates for the Sacred Ministry.*

**E**VERY one living under the Christian dispensation should assist in building the walls of Jerusalem. To seek out suitable men for the sacred ministry, from whom we might reasonably expect most extensive operations, and most important results;—to afford them encouragement by education, or by other means, is a duty not less arduous, than imperative. Yet, skill and diligence being essentially necessary in this great work; we should be scrupulous not to sanction presumptive arrogance, criminal selfishness, unenlightened folly, or mere love for ease and retirement. Let us beware of any motives arising solely from exterior circumstances, which seem to forget, to overlook, or to undervalue the grand principles of religion, as indispensable requisites for the ministerial office.

If the connexions of a candidate be eminently, and exclusively religious, making a principal figure in the Church of Christ, and deeply

interwoven with her interests; we may fear to offend, by discountenancing what conscience cannot approve. But, surely, our sanction, in this case, is too important in it's consequences, to be sacrificed at the altar even of the most ardent friendship, or the most endearing ties of human society. No circumstances, or considerations can justify what must be wrong in the sight of God; and unshaken integrity is the only path of duty, in an affair which involves the honour, and prosperity of religion, the peace of Churches, the welfare of immortal souls, and the character of future generations.

It is a very possible case, (would to God it had never occurred) that a man, lost to all honourable shame, and actuated by base, mercenary motives, may usurp "the Priest's office for a piece of bread;"—a practice which cannot be condemned in words too severe, or with a faithfulness too rigid: since it discovers such consummate ignorance; such awful prostitution of the most sacred things; such trampling upon all sincerity; such solemn mockery, and daring impiety; as make every truly serious, and feeling heart recoil. No sin can have greater



turpitude. It includes the quintessence of whatever can be offensive to God, or injurious to Man. What is worst; it unavoidably entails the most aggravated misery, disgrace, and ruin, on all who have the very sad misfortune to fall a voluntary prey to the overwhelming delusion.

If a youth move in the higher spheres of life; this *alone* should not bias our decision, though it is much to be wished, that more candidates would, like Moses, prefer public usefulness in our churches, to all other honours and distinctions. What might not be expected from sanctified riches, scattered with a wise, generous, and magnificent profusion, by holy hands, from holy motives, in the cause of God? Though in no absolute need of them; such are the constitution and order of things, both in the Church, and in the world; that JEHOVAH is pleased to demand, and to employ them, as mighty auxiliaries in promoting his glory. "The silver is mine; and the gold is mine; saith the Lord of Hosts." *Alone*, they can effect little. Combined with superior talents, benevolence, prudence, a public station, a *public spirit*, and a powerful religion, triumphing

over all worldly attachments; they seem almost Omnipotent.

Should a man be hid in poverty obscure, like “a flower in the desert;” we must remember, that God has chosen principally “the poor of this world” as instruments in his cause, both in private, and in public; that his own agency may be undisputed, and that “no flesh should glory in his presence.” None ought to be sanctioned because only they are rich; or rejected because only they are poor. Real worth and usefulness of character, especially of *religious* character, are not to be estimated by the weight of a man’s possessions, the splendour of his connexions, or the extent of his prospects; nor does poverty necessarily infer a defective understanding, a depraved heart, or an incapacity for great, and noble enterprizes. In all ages, the brightest luminaries of the world have appeared the more glorious, because originally emerging out of darkness; and the first great preachers of Christianity were the humble fishermen of Galilee;—unlettered, and unknown.

“ Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
“ The dark unfathom’d caves of Ocean bear;

“ Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
“ And waste it's fragrance on the desert air.”

A high tone of exterior morals seems to speak for it's possessor with an unanswerable voice. It is extremely desirable when resulting from evangelical principles, as the work of faith, and of love. “ Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.” But, as circumspection may arise from other sources not very honourable; we must look for something more than exemption from visible immorality. PLATO, PLUTARCH, or CONFUCIUS, though professing, inculcating, and generally practising severe morals, would have been utterly unfit to preach the “ glad tidings of great joy;”—for we know that their productions, however immortal from their own nature, are infinitely beneath, and essentially different from, the gospel of Christ. By all their amazing wisdom, they knew not God. Saul of Tarsus, though brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, belonging to “ the strictest sect” of the Pharisees, and, “ as touching the law, blameless; ” was guilty of “ breathing out threatenings and slaughter” against the Churches of Christ. He was a furious “ madman, who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death.”

When a youthful mind is formed in nature's finest mould, to which art has also given her highest decorations; who does not wish to engage it in the service of the sanctuary, where it's mighty energies could answer the end of it's Creation? But, a fine genius, strong memory, quick apprehension, chaste wit, and an enchanting elocution, uncontrolled by divine grace, may only qualify a man more effectually for mischief; as absolute power, without wisdom and goodness, being the most dangerous of all human endowments, may turn the world upside down. Tyranny and desolation, with all their train of evils, never exhibit such depravity, or excite such terror, as when resulting from an abuse of that power called ecclesiastical.

Real mental acquirements, where they might be devoted to the glory of God, seem highly calculated to do good. If a young man, by a liberal education under peculiar advantages, gain large treasuries of knowledge, ancient and modern; what allusions and imagery they would supply! What biblical criticism! What fine associations of ideas! What advantages he would have over his contemporaries! How

able to resist the proud encroachments of daring speculation, or the furious paroxysms of infidelity! Yet, were all the strength, and riches of the intellectual world to centre in one Man, he would not be qualified for the sacred office. Without godly simplicity, and holy love, all these endowments are but the deafening clangor of "sounding brass, and tinkling cymbals."

Most generally, fervent zeal displays itself in an eminent manner when religious conversion is very recent. The fire of devotion, being just kindled, blazes with rapidity; but as it's genuine warmth is not remarkable, we should not here place unbounded reliance: for, though energy is very desirable, a false impetus of the Mind soon becomes headstrong, and unruly; often producing "confusion, and every evil work." A furious zealot, whether his cause be good or bad, is not unlike a volcano, full of combustible matter, rent with dreadful convulsions, breaking out with bellowing thunders, and disgorging rocks, flames, ashes, and burning lava; covering the surrounding country with darkness and desolation. True zeal is not

passion, animal feeling, stupid tenacity, blind conceit, or childish whim. A counterfeit species has always been an object of dread; and as Christianity utterly abhors the very name of persecution, she equally detests that misguided and intemperate zeal, of which it is the natural offspring; and which is not less criminal, because professedly engaged in the cause of truth.

What character, then, should our candidates for the Gospel-ministry sustain? They should be genuine Christians, “fearing God, and eschewing evil; having passed from death unto life.” No qualifications, however numerous, or splendid, can supply the want of these. A man of mere science, a practical philosopher, or ready orator, may each shine with lustre in his proper sphere; but to introduce them into a pulpit, would place them in a system without any common affinities, or attractions to prevent their ruin, and that of numbers by their downfall. If, by sad mistake of their own, of others, or of both, such ever appear in the sacred office; they either soar out of sight, or drown their audience in the *Bathos* of metaphysics,—congeal them into a system of morals, harder,

and colder than the poles ; or feed a diseased appetite with frivolous things, not calculated to nourish the Church of God, or to glorify God himself. Every sensible man perceives, that they are out of their proper element, without the power, or inclination to change it ; and they hang upon society as heavy trappings, which could be very well spared, but cannot be easily shaken off.

To prevent these dreadful evils, let the guardians of our religious seminaries, and the leaders in public societies, refrain from urging candidates for the Christian ministry *too soon* ; and from being accessory to scenes of destruction the most awful, because operating on the everlasting interests of Mankind. Even where candidates appear fully qualified ; every thing resembling compulsion, or precipitance, should be anxiously avoided. If a youth of superior talents *will aspire* ; he may, without a spark of divine Grace, become an eminent poet, philosopher, mathematician, chemist, navigator, a naval or military hero ; and he may be of signal service to the world. But, let him turn his thoughts to commerce, to some use-

ful employment in life, to it's meanest occupations;—let him be any thing, or nothing, rather than a minister of **JESUS CHRIST**.



## No. VI.

*On Music as connected with Religion.*

THE wonderful anatomy of the human frame, especially of the ear, and of the nervous system shows that we are formed to relish the harmony of sounds; and, though a love for Music be partially acquired, it is in great measure, like Poetry it's companion, the offspring of Nature, and of God;—heaven being the place of it's nativity. However a composer, by skilfully arranging his *Majors* and *Minors*, may ravish our feelings, or display his powers; he is not properly the *originator* of his science, any more than a Mathematician, or Astronomer,—he only has peculiar talents, like them, to discover for exhibition, the hidden laws of nature, appointed by the great Jehovah. Every chord a musician strikes, supposes a harmonic system coeval with the Universe;—a system beyond his intellect, much more his invention. Notwithstanding the ingenious hypothesis of *vibrations*, as the cause of musical tones; who can tell why a major, or a minor key produces such very different effects on the nerves, and on the mind,—why discords, unless under pe-

culiar circumstances, pain every musical ear,—why they have any existence at all,—why in different keys, the semitones fall in different places,—why, properly speaking, there are but seven notes in a musical scale,—or why a thousand octaves, could they all at once be perfectly tuned, would be one simple, undistinguished sound? As all sounds are but air in motion;—why one series should displease and another delight, is a question justly numbered among the deepest mysteries.

According to their civilization and refinement, all nations practise something of this science. If there be, here and there, any who, like the great Dr. Johnson, are insensible to it's charms; we may safely ascribe it to a natural defect in the nervous system, or in the organ of hearing,—a defect very different from deafness, partial or total. Mankind being by nature generally susceptible of such impressions, it is no wonder that Music has been much employed in religion. To this view of the subject, we shall confine our remarks, not noticing the choral processions of antiquity, Bacchanalian Orgies, Arcadian scenes, warlike noise, or theatrical entertainments.

Praising God audibly, and socially, is a duty of highest importance; urged by such powerful motives, that, with much surprise, we behold it placed, without a shadow of reason, many degrees lower than prayer, meditation, hearing sermons, or searching the scriptures. Many seem to think that religion does not require it; and act as if it did not at all belong to the system, if they do not absolutely condemn it as unbecoming. But MARTIN LUTHER, a true musical soul, was ready to doubt a man's religion who had no taste, or little regard, for singing in divine worship; and an authority infinitely above his, repeatedly commands us to celebrate the praises of heaven, with one heart, and one voice. "Praise ye the Lord. "Praise the Lord, O! my soul. While I live, "I will praise the Lord: I will sing praises "unto my God, while I have any being. "Praise him, O ye servants of the Lord. Ye "that stand in the house of the Lord, in the "courts of the house of your God, Praise ye "the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto "our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is "comely. Praise ye him, all his angels: "praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, "Sun and Moon: praise him, all ye stars of

“light. Kings of the earth, and all people:  
“princes, and all judges of the earth. Both  
“young men and maidens; old men and chil-  
“dren: let them praise the name of the Lord.  
“Sing unto the Lord, a new song, and his  
“praise *in the congregation* of the saints. Let  
“every thing that hath breath, praise the Lord.  
“Praise ye the Lord.”

The eucharistical hymn after the passover had ceased, and our Lord's fine answer to the Pharisees, who were offended with the swelling chorus of his disciples, at the mount of Olives, discover his sentiments on this subject very clearly. “If these should hold their peace, *the stones* would immediately cry out.” The Apostle Paul, imbibing the real spirit of his Master, says, “I will sing with the spirit, and  
“I will sing with the understanding also.  
“Teaching and admonishing one another in  
“psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, sing-  
“ing with Grace in your hearts to the Lord.” The Christian dispensation, so far from abolishing sacred Music, as a mere appendage to  
“carnal ordinances, and a worldly sanctuary,” places it on it's true basis, as a moral institution, obligatory upon all who have a natural

capacity for it. Why such commands should be considered as inferior to others confessedly of great moment; or why it should be a less crime to have the talent, yet to neglect the work of praise, than not to *pray* where a gift is possessed; it is very difficult to divine: since nothing tends more to sink an officiating minister, and his hearers, in the dust. If he have an ear for music—good, vocal singing greatly calivens him; and has often been the precursor of an animated, edifying sermon, which, otherwise, would have lulled as an opiate. We are so much the creatures of *sense*, even in our most solemn devotions, that they need every stimulus that can be safely employed; and to censure a preacher for a *dull sermon*, after our wandering, dreadful discords have distressed his feelings, is to become partners in his blame.

These things show the absolute necessity of some skilful persons to lead the psalmody in our Churches, and Chapels, in a profitable, rational manner; though a numerous vocal choir has it's disadvantages, and difficulties; especially when seconded by an equal, and, perhaps, a greater number of instrumental per-

formers. It is also desirable that leaders should, if possible, be men “fearing God,” or generally “of good report;” lest a votary to BACCHUS should preside in the worship of JEHOVAH. What can be more offensive, even to those who are not *Amateurs*, than hearing in the temple of heaven, a boisterous discord, resembling Milton’s “grating harsh thunder of the infernal doors,”—sound and movement in direct hostility to the finest sentiment, and language, that poetry can furnish; utterly defeating every purpose for which they were composed;—or a bungling attempt at a complicated piece, making it excite any feeling but what we desire;—or a jig air, struck off a third too high, with a Stentorian voice, and lashed along by JEHU, to a hymn on the last judgment, after an alarming sermon on the same subject;—or a funeral dirge; with hoarse, and hollow murmurs, to a lively, rapturous song on the celestial joys of religion? Such incongruities, by no means uncommon, are enough to banish us from the house of God,—saying, “Oh! that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.”

Abundant reasons warrant us to believe,

that, as Music forms, and will for ever form, a principal employment in heaven; it is there practised in fullest perfection; so that deliberately to despise it on Earth, involves a contempt of sacred things. DR. WATTS laments bitterly, that what is so well done in heaven, should often be shamefully performed on Earth. His mild, and placid feelings are so roused, as to produce in the preface to his Hymns, the severest censure in all his writings; and to his dissatisfaction on this head, amounting almost to *indignation*, we owe his immortal exertions to improve our Psalmody in it's matter, manner, and spirit. It is not a little mortifying to every lover of sacred harmony, that, on the Stage, and in all the synagogues of Satan, this noble science should have most encouragement, and attain it's Acme, in a cause so ill-deserving of such a powerful auxiliary;—that a practice of divine origin should be prostituted to purposes most base, and injurious. Nor can we feel much better satisfied, that, in it's religious use, Music has found the greatest patronage, by giving it's honours to that Church, which the Scriptures denominate, “THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS.” That in this, and other communities, it has been abused, carried to

excess, and idolized, is no more an argument against the good performance of the thing itself, than intemperance, or covetousness can be sufficient reasons ; why we should not eat, and drink, or practise the virtue of frugality.

Whether musical *instruments* should ever be employed in public worship, is a question admitting of much dispute. On this subject, all combatants seem to claim the victory ; and, perhaps, we shall be nearest the truth, in allowing it to be a matter of *indifference*. None but a foe to human happiness, a real *misanthrope*, can absolutely forbid, and severely condemn, their *private* use, under proper restrictions, as an innocent parlour-recreation, to promote health, by raising our spirits, alleviating distress, banishing corroding cares, or preventing leisure-hours from sinful employ, by occupying them in the work of praise. The powers of David's harp upon himself, and upon others, are far more wonderful, rational, and becoming, than all the fabled, magical effects of the lyre of ORPHEUS. When in the midst of his transports, he seems an angel inspired, and commissioned to give us a specimen of celestial harmony ; we are at a loss which to admire most,



—the lofty music of his dancing strings, the sublimity of his sentiments, or the fire of his soul. Take him all in all,—if there be any one of the Old Testament saints whom I could wish to resemble, it is the sweet Psalmist of Israel.

The constant, and extensive use of instruments in Jewish worship, by divine command, proves that they are not evils *per se*; but only thro' abuse, and misapplication. On the other hand; to suppose an organ, or any other instrument, to possess some holy charm, is as weak, as publicly to address one in it's dedication-service; using the *grand* apostrophe of an ancient preacher, when overcome with musical adoration,—“By what shall I call thee? Oh! thou divine box of sounds!!” But *a single instrument*, being highly advantageous to guide one or more vocal leaders, and also a congregation, by regulating the time, and enlivening the scene, is lawful, expedient, and often necessary, when used with only that intention. A full band of instruments in a Church, or Chapel, however attractive to the ear, tends to draw the attention from the grand concerns of religion, over-whelms all vocal efforts, wastes the sacred moments, and produces innumerable

mischiefs which every serious Amateur will allow and deplore. Knowing that praise is essentially the work of *lips* expressing internal sensations; he uniformly prefers the sweet chorus of human voices, to all the boasted instrumental compositions of the greatest masters, performed by themselves, in the most captivating manner.

To increase our religious assemblies—good, congregational singing should be studiously cultivated, and encouraged. As a magnet of attraction, it cannot be less justifiable than popular *preaching*; both being supported by the same authority, and practised for the same purposes. If well conducted; it diffuses a visible joy, and serenity over a whole assembly; greatly preparing them to hear the word of God, banishing many oppressive fears, peacefully soothing many a beating heart, powerfully elevating the most grovelling affections to things above. Holy gratitude impels the voice to utterance, even where, from some natural defect, it's sounds cannot be melodious; and a breast, full of adoration, *must* pour out it's feelings.

“ My willing soul would stay  
“ In such a frame as this ;  
“ And sit, and sing herself away  
“ To everlasting bliss.”

When public singing is ill-managed, the very atmosphere in the place seems conscious;— seems to show marked dislike by it's irritating pulsations which disturb our frame. A storm is raised in the mind. Every countenance wears a frown, or is convulsed with laughter, or sinks into a sullen, settled, silent gloom.—

“ Hosannas languish on our tongues,  
“ And our devotions die.”

Nor can these opposite effects be ascribed to mere caprice, or to fashion. As in oratory, so in singing ; there is a species which can please only the learned, or the fastidious ; but a good oration well delivered, and a good tune well sung, will give universal satisfaction. They are the work of Nature, which alone always charms.

As a necessary help to private religion ; as a mode of holding close converse with the Deity ; and as a part of family-service ; singing claims our highest regard. The discords of households are banished by the voice of harmony

and love,—unpleasing, unsocial feelings are chased away, and torpid minds are roused to action. To a musician—a closet, or prison cannot be a solitary cell; and the most cruel sufferings of captivity, have been alleviated by the power of sounds. The jail of Philippi, otherwise loathsome, and noxious, was no horrible place, when resounding with the praises of Paul and Silas. Every day, during life, may we sing our Maker's honours with energy divine. In death,—when “trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,”—may they flutter continually on our lips;—till “absent from the body,” or fully clothed with immortality, we perfect his praise among the harps, and symphonies of Heaven, where discords cannot come.

## No. VII.

*On some Extremes in Religion.*

**M**AN, boasting of reason, is ever prone to excess; as appears in his manners, diet, apparel, antipathies, and pursuits. This is most surprising, and injurious in religion; where his vanity, or the importance of the subject, persuades him that extremes are impossible, or praise-worthy. Something within;—whether pride, selfishness, or love for opposition, impels him to unhallowed rivalship, the parent of bigotry and party-spirit,—producing in their turn a boundless progeny of Antichristian feelings. Religious denominations are often in battle-array, as if contending on a field of blood, for a kingdom of this world;—sacrificing in an unprofitable, ignominious warfare, every principle of peace, consistency, honour, religion, justice, truth, and reason;—the end sanctifying the means. The noble, justifiable principle of emulation con-created with us;—the becoming attachment every one has a right to show to his own sect;—the acknowledged importance of Christian zeal, and a professed aim at the Divine glory; have served as the

flimsy pretext for “compassing Sea and Land to make one proselyte,”—to make him perhaps, “tenfold more the child of Hell than before;”—destroying with a party-blow, the infinite glories of religion, to support an empty, self-given, perishable name;—often no proper designation of those who bear it, and who are so unreasonably jealous, lest it should sink into oblivion.

Yet, when a man, by voluntary union, visibly belongs to any religious body, they claim his peculiar regards. To be neuter, or indiscriminating in our attachments is equally criminal; discovering much weakness, and a wavering disposition not very honourable. Christian candour leads us to say, “Grace be with *all them* who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.” But, the society to which we belong is our proper *home*, where our best wishes, prayers, and exertions should centre,—prudently, when duty calls, making the circuit of *universal* charity,—“giving to every one a portion in due season.” Under the specious, imposing, self-gratifying name of liberality to other denominations; numbers, it is feared, may *unintentionally* injure their own;

and justly awaken suspicion of their *decided* attachment to *any*,—thus effectually serving none;—a powerful temptation in an age, when religious claims are so numerous, and so just; and when universal patronage is so much enforced, and applauded. If a ship display alternately the colours of *all* nations, who can say where she really belongs,—whether she be a friend or a foe? A decided preference to one's own community is not selfish bigotry, or narrow party-feeling; but Christian fellowship, an avowed loyalty to the King of Zion,—claiming much approbation, and no censure. No principle of religion, no laws of human society, no ties of friendship, oblige a man to care for another's family, or property, to the *neglect* of his own; or to extinguish a fire in his friend's house, when his own dwelling, and family are encircled in flames. As in politics, so in religion, our patriotism should shine *every where*;—but brightest at home: and as the stream of benevolence cannot be equally deep in all places, it should be strongest where most wanted, because most claimed. Public good (woe be to him that neglects it!) does not wholly exclude individual preference; as existing circumstances will always exhibit a priority of

claim to guide our exertions. He is the truest friend of MISSIONS, who in abundantly relieving the wants of Heathens abroad, by espousing the cause on *all* occasions; is, with undiminished ardour, an active friend to religion in his own country; as the Patriarch JOSEPH allowed copious exportations of corn, at the same time, keeping the granaries of Egypt well supplied.

Religious *sentiment* is of such vast importance, as demands the greatest attention. This conviction, if deeply rooted, but not carefully watched, produces a fondness for *doctrine only*; to the virtual exclusion, not to say *denial*, of all the remaining, and interesting parts of religion,—essential, as radical things, to its beauty and excellence;—orthodoxy becomes ALPHA and OMEGA. Sermons, or treatises, overcharged with doctrine, resemble an extensive electrical battery, or a high galvanic pile, capable of most tremendous effects;—advantageous, or injurious, according as they are used,—the fault of many good old Divines,—burning and shining lights in their day,—now, much undervalued and neglected. Not only there may be overweening partiality to sentiments in general, but



also to a particular class, to one simple truth,—for instance, *predestination*. This doctrine, Oliver Cromwell; Charles the XII of Sweden; the Turks, and other nations; the abettors of philosophical necessity; some Divines not unjustly called *Pseudo-Calvinists*; and even some avowed infidels; have carried to a superstitious, daring, and sinful extreme, exposing it to unmerited obloquy. Others consider it as the old serpent's egg, issuing from the infernal lake, full of deadly poison. Every doctrine has, like the Ocean, it's proper boundaries; beyond which, if we attempt to force it, the tide overwhelms. Firm decision, a love of truth, and an unshaken zeal for it's propagation, differ much from a disposition to push any one doctrine from it's proper sphere. The former resemble a beautiful, compact, harmonious system, moving in boundless space, with majesty divine. The latter is like a ruinous attempt to hurl a planet from it's orbit, beyond the points of attraction, where it rolls in grandeur and in safety. To excite caution, it should never be forgotten, that *mère theory*, by generating pride, contentions, and sometimes malice; paralyzes, or annihilates, the finest affections and endearments of human life,—the torch of

truth, intended as the light of the world, becomes a flaming firebrand to consume it. "If  
 "any man consent not to *wholesome* words,  
 "even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 "and to the doctrine which is according to  
 "godliness: he is proud, knowing nothing,  
 "but *doting* about questions and strifes of  
 "*words*, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings,  
 "evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men  
 "of *corrupt* minds, and destitute of the truth;  
 "supposing that gain is godliness."

Laxity of views, or *indifference* to all settled notions is not uncommon. Over-rigid exactness in terms and phrases, accompanied with a dogmatical spirit, and unbending severity in non-essentials, will produce them,—infidelity has often been the unhappy result. The angry strife sometimes occasioned by a word, or half a word,

" Resembles Ocean into tempest wrought,  
 " To waft a feather, or to drown a fly."

Rather than bow to such tyranny, the mind embraces a licentious liberty; and, under the deception of becoming "all things to all men," will be of every creed, or of none; like a vane

finely balanced, whirled by the slightest breeze. But true religion *always* rests upon scriptural sentiment, as a basis essential to it's safety and existence; nor is it possible for the heart and conduct to be right, where the head is very materially wrong: as the will, when acting rationally, must always follow the sound and safe dictates of an enlightened understanding. Hence the noted lines of Mr. Pope, are liable to much misapprehension;—

“ For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;

“ His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.”

If they intend, as probably was their original meaning, that a man's life may be right, directed by *any* creed; they contain a dangerous error. But, should they mean, that, if his life be directed by truly evangelical principles, as the result of sanctifying grace, his “mode of faith” cannot be *essentially* wrong; they may, in this sense, be allowed. With *this* interpretation of the couplet, we can admire the sentiment of this eminent poet, as much as the harmony of his numbers. “We walk by faith,” and are saved “thro' sanctification of the spirit, and *belief of the truth.*” Our Lord prays for his followers in very remarkable words,—

“ Sanctify them through thy *truth*, thy word is truth.” To treat with indifference those sacred truths which God reveals as necessary to salvation, is the highest contempt of his authority. As fire and ice sometimes produce the same sensations; loose morals are equally the effect of sentiment too high, or too low,—too rigid, or too lax,—too hot, or too cold. The natural, final consequences of all these, are the total destruction of truth and holiness, and the triumphs of darkness, vice, and death.

“ Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Buy the truth, and sell it not. Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, —ungodly men turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness,—holding the truth in unrighteousness. Be not children in understanding : howbeit, in malice be ye children ; but in understanding be men.”

Plain as are the dictates of *practical religion*, they are frequently abused, by vainly endeavouring to establish them on the ruins of the gospel of Christ; or by *disowning* them at once. A sermon on religious duties, guarded from all legal tendencies, makes opposite impressions in the same assembly;—one exclusively calling it mere law; and others,—good gospel; whereas, in fact, it is composed of both. Christian obedience differs from Phariſaical holiness, as light from darkness;—the former honours and exalts the grace of God; the latter destroys it. Antinomians sometimes run their scheme to the most awful length,—maintaining that believers, being exempted from the cognizance of God's law, cannot possibly sin,—making “Christ the minister of iniquity.” Determined to turn the grace of God into licentiousness, some extend the doctrine to *all* Mankind without distinction; and, as extremes beget extremes, these dreadful representations have driven many a weak votary of superstition, to pains, and penances for salvation, as *suppletory* to obedience; and have caused many a good minister, filled with consternation at an unholy gospel, to preach up morals perhaps sufficiently unguarded to be in

danger of the Rev. J. Berridge's dilemma, who declaimed on the subject, till he had scarcely a moral man in his parish! What numbers rest wholly on duties; drawing all their peace and comforts thence; sadly overlooking the work of him who is the only real Comforter? Not a few keep up a show of Christian practice, more for credit, and interest, than from any love to genuine holiness, resulting from faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many a Man with a heart full of all uncleanness, and a prey to every lust, wishes his relatives, friends, neighbours, domestics, tradesmen, and customers, to be strictly moral;—as our CHARLES II. would reprove vice in a court, which was grossly infected by his own most powerful example. The place which *practice* should hold in a religious system, is very clearly marked. “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace. Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Do we then make void the law thro' faith?

“ God forbid: yea, we establish the law. I  
 “ came not to *destroy* the law,—but to ful-  
 “ fil. Let ours also learn to maintain good  
 “ works for necessary uses, that they be not  
 “ unfruitful. Bring forth therefore fruits meet  
 “ for repentance. Let your light so shine be-  
 “ fore Men, that they may see your good  
 “ works, and glorify your Father, who is in  
 “ Heaven.”

What the soul is to the body, *experience* is in religion,—essential to it's life, beauty, comfort, and usefulness. A denial of it tends to banish religion from the Universe; leaving human feelings no sphere in which to act, but what is destructive to Man: and after all that speculative, impious minds can advance against it, supernatural agency is no delusion. “ I  
 “ *know* whom I have believed. *We know* that  
 “ we are of God, and the whole world lieth in  
 “ wickedness. Hereby *we know* that we are  
 “ of the truth, and shall *assure* our hearts be-  
 “ fore him.” But, as the excellency of a thing exposes it proportionably to abuse; religious experience has been misconceived, and misapplied. Fánaticism, enthusiasm, emotions self-excited, or arising merely from external ob-

jects ; animal feeling ; and even the impulse of Satan, are mistaken for it. The imagination has been, from various causes, often led astray ; or the secret springs of pride have been touched by some unknown hand, so as to generate a persuasion, that every comfortable feeling is the work of the Holy Ghost : and the Christian Ministry may be addressed so *exclusively* to the passions, as not a little to aid such deceptions. But we should remember, that *no feelings* are, *per se*, infallible criteria of sincerity ; and to live upon them, or to derive our comforts wholly from them, is to build on the sand a superstructure which should last for ever. When feelings have passed due bounds, they cease to be *religious* ; and excite the strongest objections in the human mind. To this we may ascribe much of that awful opposition against the agency of the spirit, which gradually reduces Christianity to a mere form, and name. Many prefer SCYLLA to CHARYBDIS ; not recollecting that there is a safe passage between both, without incurring the dangers of either.

From whatever cause arising, it is an error which we sometimes see ; that a Man makes his



experience, in all it's degrees, a standard for others; —shutting out of the kingdom of Heaven all who are not every way like *him*. Surely this is uncandid; for though genuine religion is in all cases radically the same, it varies much in it's degrees and operations; as one tree may be more lively, and more fruitful than another, though belonging to the same owner, planted by the same hand, in the same place, nourished by the same power, and exactly of the same species. Moses and Aaron, Peter and John, Paul and Barnabas, Apollos and Timothy,—all shining men; had great variety of character. “There is one glory of the Sun, and another glory of the Moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another in glory.”

Another most unhappy mistake is, that, because in our profession, we do not come up to the standard of others whom we much admire, our state cannot be safe;—a notion originating in the same cause as the former, and to be corrected by the same means. A child is a human being, though very far from manhood; and saplings of the forest are oaks, though not towering like Bashan's. Presuming confidence is

easily acquired; but genuine, religious *rapture* is the happy lot of very few; and the safety of our state rests upon grounds very different from the fickle sensations of human minds, or any visible degree of religious attainments. Notwithstanding the invariable, and incorruptible *nature* of divine Grace; spiritual acquirements differ so much, as renders it impossible to select any one human character as a perfect, unvarying standard for all mankind. If it be rational to suppose, that in the Heavenly world, Angels and glorified spirits have different degrees of intellectual capacity, and moral excellence; why should we not expect the same in the present, changeable scene of things? And if considerable variations in *sentiment*, when essentials are the same, be compatible with final salvation; why may not some diversity of feeling be experienced by many sincere Christians, whose *general* religious sensations are exactly similar? As spiritual sorrows, joys, hopes, and fears are not tangible, or *measurable*, like liquids, or regular bodies; who shall say what *quantum* of each, or of all, constitutes the essence of religion?

There is such a thing in the religious world

as *intemperate zeal*. We speak not of bigots, or persecutors, whose paroxysms do so much mischief; but of those Men of real worth, and true piety, who, though often misled by the impulse of their own passions, and of a sanguine temperament, have an ardent desire to do good. Their well-meant exertions are, in some cases, mistimed, misplaced, and mismanaged; so as to involve themselves, and many others, without any sufficient, justifiable cause, in very serious, and permanent difficulties, which, perhaps, a little patience, or a little more deliberation would have obviated.

Sometimes the precipitancy of an individual, or two, otherwise good-intentioned men, but forgetting the advice of the town-clerk of Ephesus, “to do nothing rashly,” has, instead of raising the walls of Zion according to their pious design, made “the stones of the sanctuary to be poured out in the top of every street.” Then, Oh! Zion! “all that pass by clap their hands “at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the “daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the “city that men call the perfection of beauty, “the joy of the whole earth? All thine enemies “——gnash the teeth: they say, we have

“swallowed her up : certainly this is the day  
“that we looked for : we have found, we have  
“seen it.”

Sometimes, party-feeling, and a love for *distinction*, predominate in zealous minds, as much as the glory of God, and the good of souls. What, by reason of it's complications, must *necessarily* be the work of a day; they *will* accomplish in a moment : and by attempting too much, or all at once, they attain nothing. They should remember the Dutch pensionary DE WIT; who alone managed all the politics of his country, and had still much leisure, by doing only one thing at a time. God forbid, that we should appear to advocate, or connive at a lukewarm, or a cold-blooded system, ever calculating upon difficulties, expenses, times, seasons, and favourable opportunities,—always crying “there is a lion in the street;”—or that we should cherish those gloomy forebodings, and imaginary fears, which are the death-blow of all success,—a mildew in the garden of God. Business-meetings on the affairs of Churches and congregations, when repeatedly adjourned without any sufficient cause, or for no other reason but a child-

ish fear of *some* difficulties, expense, or trouble;—ever scheming, and never able to arrive at conclusions;—remind us of the famous lawsuit between the heirs of VISCOUNT LISLE, and of LORD BERKLEY, which commenced in the reign of EDWARD IV, and terminated by *compromising* the matter in the reign of JAMES I, having lasted above one Hundred and Twenty years!

On the other hand,—who can admire a hasty, domineering, overbearing zeal, full of invective, bordering on insolence; trampling upon all the feelings, delicacies, and connexions of human life; sweeping all before it, like a tornado,—good, bad, and indifferent; or burning with SACHEVERELIAN fury, setting nations in a blaze? Our Lord will not have *tares* instantly extirpated out of his field, lest we “root up also the *wheat* with them;” and he strongly censured his disciples when their zeal became vengeance. If the two souls of LUTHER and MELANCTHON had been combined in one, their character had appeared to much higher advantage. A judicious mariner waits a proper time for a favourable gale; but, when he *must* go, or lose his voyage, he sets out at all events to

risk the consequences : and, when Christian zeal is at it's utmost height ; prudence, candour, and cool discretion, “ ride in the whirlwind, and direct the storm.”

Yet, when exclaiming against all extremes in religion ; let none suppose that *a little will serve*. Of what is genuine, we cannot have too much ; and the extremes here condemned, form *no part* of pure Christianity, but directly tend to ruin that holy cause they profess to uphold ; and, by disgusting every intelligent Mind, provoke the hiss of infidelity ; or the scorn of satire. They “ eat as doth a canker ;” and, instead of diffusing light and gladness through the world, fill it with “ lamentation, mourning, and woe.”

## No. VIII.

*On Simplicity in Religion.*

**N**OTWITHSTANDING it's innumerable charms, religious simplicity is more easily described, and understood, than practically exhibited. Closely related to modest humility, it stands opposed to that arrogance, deceit, and self-sufficient pride, which delight in mystery and show, as indications of pretended greatness;—which disdain the contrary virtues of prudent frankness, reluctance for human applause, and undisguised behaviour, as weak, pusillanimous, and disgraceful. Not that religion is a simple thing, or it's ardent votaries *simpletons*, as these phrases are usually understood;—for the whole Universe presents to the human mind nothing comparable in grandeur, and sublimity, or so much beyond it's utmost reach. Every thing that can exercise, delight, or astonish the intellect,—that can engage the affections, or influence the heart to great, and noble pursuits,—that can confer peace, perfection, and happiness, is found in religion. Standing on the brink of it's immensities, the highest created intelligences exclaim,—“OH!

THE DEPTH.”! It fills the mind of God himself. Yet, amidst a constellation of glories combining every possible excellence, in every possible degree; it’s simplicity shines as the grandest;—constituting, as in the noblest works of Nature, or of Art, the chief quality of the sublime and beautiful.

In the Jewish dispensation, which is not the less venerable for it’s complex forms; this charming feature of simplicity is distinctly visible, though not to superficial observers; and the character of believers in that age, displays it in no ordinary manner. Nor must this be attributed merely to the influence of primitive, national habits, and customs; but rather to the unsophisticated operations of religion itself. But, in the Christian Œconomy, it appears with unbounded superiority, as the light of Day outshines the twilight of the morning. It’s doctrines, rites, worship, and injunctions, positive, and moral, are all simple;—for this reason, they exceed in glory, as “a pattern of heavenly things.” The gospel of Christ, in unity of design, of plan, and of means, stands, like it’s divine Author, unrivalled, and alone.



As man, though capable of abstract reasoning, and moral suasion, is led powerfully by his senses; *a glaring exterior* has often been thought necessary, and justifiable, to recommend religion to his attention, and to enforce it upon his conscience;—as if it's own native energies were insufficient to gain supreme ascendancy, without the aid of human contrivance; or as if Man could add something to Omnipotence. Numbers forget, that religion is, like Nature, “when unadorn'd, adorn'd the most.” Hence, among other causes, has arisen all the pomp of Christendom, in every age and nation,—enlisting into it's gainful service, genius and power, arts and sciences, wealth and magnificence,—producing buildings, altars, emblems, decorations, rubrics, garments, vessels, officers, and ministerial orders, to give existence and *eclat* to endless etiquette. We have long arrived at an *Æra*, when these gorgeous follies lose much of their attraction, tho' there is abundant room for advancement in simplicity; and it is not without cause that we fear, lest those who profess themselves utterly averse to religious pomp, should be gradually entangled in the snare against which they have loudly, and so repeatedly warned others.

Through the impulse of an unguarded zeal, they are contented that religion should assume any form, and call in any decorations, as auxiliaries, provided *it's essence* be not destroyed, and that the work bid fair for "universal empire." What they cannot fully approve as rational, scriptural, and becoming; they resolve to endure, as necessary, or expedient. But, though external forms are left, in some measure, to human discretion, every man having undoubted right to practise what he thinks best; deviations from simplicity must be at variance with sound reason, and Holy Scripture; defeating the very end for which they exist. If we would avoid leading weak minds into the common, though fatal mistake, of depending upon externals for salvation, or of supposing that pomp is devotion;—every thing in a worshipping assembly;—the building, the minister, the whole service of the sanctuary, the official characters, and regulations, should always be, what the poet says on a very different occasion, "*simplex m'nditiis,*"—*neat and p'ain*; or, as a much higher authority commands;—all ought to "be done decently and in order," as a fit emblem of the celestial world.

Disposition is the most important part of a man's religion;—the root of his system. This, widely different from duplicity, should exhibit a decided, prevailing unity of design,—the temper of “an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile,” having his “eye single” to the glory of God; not diseased with watery humours, producing a confused vision of all things; fixing steadily upon none. This is the more important, as disposition, by giving strength, if not existence to all our motives, governs, decides, and permanently fixes the whole character. Simplicity, even when the companion of ardent zeal, disdains every thing resembling political chicanery; worldly policy; criminal selfishness: combination of designs; dark, suspicious contrivances, and party-rage;—laying no crafty snares; using no ambiguous phrases to entangle; making no delusive promises; assuming no appearances of lovely friendship to seduce the unwary. Ambition and fame, with all their mighty impulse, cannot bear it away. It delights in privacy, and in the testimony of a good conscience,—surprised at, and shrinking from eminent, well-deserved distinctions, as the Sensitive Plant from the touch. When a good man, to show that he is susceptible of

gratitude, and to become more extensively useful in his day, condescends to receive such perishing honours, without undervaluing them; he wears his insignia only as a Man, not as a Christian; and knowing that they constitute no part of his genuine character, he feels something within himself infinitely superior. They do not adorn *him*;—he adorns *them*. What a contrast he displays, when compared with the worldlings of his age!

“ He sees with other eyes than their’s: where they  
“ Behold a Sun, he spies a Deity;  
“ What makes them only smile, makes him adore.  
“ Where they see mountains, he but atoms sees:  
“ An empire, in his balance, weighs a grain.  
“ They things terrestrial worship as divine;  
“ His hopes immortal blow them by as dust,  
“ That dims his sight, and shortens his survey,  
“ Which longs, in infinite, to lose all bound.  
“ Titles and honours, (if they prove his fate)  
“ He lays aside to find his dignity;  
“ They triumph in externals (which conceal  
“ Man’s real glory) proud of an eclipse.  
“ Himself too much he prizes to be proud.”

YOUNG.

In a minister’s public or private character, *simplicity* forms his greatest recommendation;

diffusing a radiance over the whole. It allows no lordly power, nor forbidding aspect; no affected politeness, nor designing behaviour; no spiritual legerdemain;—yet, as a Christian, he is “courteous,” and as a Man,—refined. In his sermons, the most learned admire, approve, and applaud, what the illiterate can understand; as they are happily free from bombast, gay confusion, foolish conceits, dark labyrinths without a clue, flights of empty declamation; absurd, and disgusting comparisons, whimsical illustrations, fiery scolding, dogmatical airs, self-display, unmanly trappings, mean tricks for popularity, and all childish parade of learning, or of wit;—yet they contain all the characters of true eloquence; and not a particle of true ministerial dignity is surrendered. His official prayers exhibit no pompous diction, no unholy familiarity, no proud abasement, no vain attempts to shine, and surpass. Feeling his own needy condition, he prays as a sinner, more than as a minister. His petitions are not a *mere address* to the Deity, presented in his best manner; but a most important *request*, urged in the pure, spontaneous, strong, beautiful language of nature. Being moved himself, he soon moves others. His public speech-

es, which he is not hasty to produce, display no false, over-laboured oratory; no obnoxious flattery; no envious rivalry; no weak determination to be utterly unlike every one else; no indirect self-praise; no studied paradoxes; no Utopian schemes.

“ Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,  
 \*        \*        \*        \*        \*        \*        \*  
 \*        \*        \*        \*        \*        \*        \*

“ I would express him SIMPLE, grave, sincere;  
 “ In doctrine uncorrupt; in language PLAIN,  
 “ And PLAIN in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,  
 “ And natural in gesture; much impress’d  
 “ Himself, as conscious of his awful charge;  
 “ And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds  
 “ May feel it too; affectionate in look,  
 “ And tender in address, as well becomes  
 “ A messenger of grace to guilty men.”

COWPER.

What is this, but a fine, poetical paraphrase upon the Apostle’s declaration?—“ For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in *simplicity* and godly sincerity, not with *fleshly wisdom*, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.”

In religious writings, simplicity should predominate. They afford unbounded scope for genius, having assumed in our age every form which allegory, dialogue, and dramatic representation, can properly give them; nor is there that "paucity" of subjects on this head, which some very celebrated men have supposed. To some former writers in this way, we owe much. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Bunyan's *Pilgrim*, and his *Holy War*, though amazingly different in manner, are works of kindred genius, being unrivalled examples of greatness united with simplicity. For this reason, they seem dangerous models to imitate, and many copyists remind us of Horace's wise counsel,

"Sumite materiam vestris, qui scribitis, æquam

"Viribus; et versate diu, quid terre recusent,

"Quid valeant humeri."

We live in an age of *novels*, and frequently, religious writings, however disclaiming the thing itself, most certainly put on that appearance, and are deservedly called by that name, being actually arranged in some catalogues under that head. Without condemning works of this kind in the gross, their writers and readers would do well to consider,—that, it is dif-

ficult to preserve simplicity, not to say *truth*, in such performances;--that narratives, when only *founded* in a fact, or two, are in danger of giving us "what never was, nor is, nor e'er shall be;"—that the shoals of novels, usually so called, do mischief, not merely by their poisonous sentiments, but by keeping up a constant irritation, and insatiable craving of Mind, which are at once the causes, and the consequences of their existence;—that man is a *reasoning* creature, not *all* passion and feeling;—that even religious works of this class, except under severe restrictions, seem to imply, that man is *not* to be led by reason, and motives, as proper exciting powers, but by some extraneous, mechanical impulse;--that, though there may probably be other ways to the heart, the most effectual, certain, and durable one, is by the *understanding*;—that unless entertainment be combined with instruction, no valuable end is answered; that nothing is more dangerous to the general welfare, and salutary existence of the human Mind, than perpetually exciting the imagination, which operates like unceasing stimulants on the bodily frame, *mental intoxication* being the result;—that, on the very lowest estimate of injury, excessive perusal of works of imagina-



tion, inevitably weakens the mental energies, especially the memory, so as to render them incapable of manly exertions;—that infidelity more easily turns into ridicule works of fancy, than those of argument;—that the allegories, and parables of Scripture, are not less *works of reason*, than of figurative allusion; and are remarkable, above all things, for their *simpli-city*. Yet,—when a simple, religious, or moral tale is well told, or a dialogue well supported, without distortions, unnatural colouring, or adventures, and incidents, out of the range of probability;—when they speak of *every-day facts*, though, perhaps, founded upon no particular occurrences as their immediate reference, and are a lively, faithful exhibition of human character, and manners,—let no stern, imperious, unmerciful critic, touch them with “the sceptre of oblivion.”

The Churches of Christ, as public bodies, *on public occasions*, should wear the robes of simplicity, however antique, or unfashionable. Their court-dress, on Levee-days, should be that prescribed by the “King of Kings.”—“Be clothed with *humility*.” In all their affairs, internal, or external, every thing like “the

burning fever of renown," theatrical display, carnal boasting, and the *finesse* of the World, should be resolutely, conscientiously, and practically disavowed. Let them be grand only in their simplicity. In an age when local, and national refinements, necessarily, and imperceptibly, give a tincture to religious profession, and when different communities, excited, we trust, by a noble emulation, seem anxious for pre-eminence;—still let them resemble their Divine Head, who was "meek and lowly;" shunning the plaudits and notice of Men, or not seeking such gratifications. To enter into an arena for victory; to be styled *Olympionices*; and to be crowned with garlands amidst the shouts of a multitude, should be no part of Christian ambition. Yet, a sensible, pious Man, knows how to receive, to value, and properly to return, a testimony of public esteem from a Christian assembly. He considers such laurels as worthy of possession; and though, when they are conferred, his face be suffused with a blush; his heart feels a rapture which must not be condemned.

The churches of Christ, with their present, unexampled, unexhausted benevolence, and their

increasing zeal for the spiritual happiness of the whole human race, should carefully unite the more splendid ornament of humility,—a pearl, in the sight of God, of great price. *Fashion*, that despotic tyranness, sometimes extends her amazing empire over the religious world; and, as she delights in continual changes, improvement being a constant plea, there is reason to fear, lest unconscious votaries, charmed with her spell, should follow this fascinating, powerful Goddess, more than “the simplicity which is in Christ,”—a sad exchange;—rather an incalculable loss. As in the dress of the body, so in religion, a fastidious singularity in matters of indifference, should be always avoided,—much more a whimsical compliance with an ever-varying mode; lest, by degrees, the best principles of the heart should be corrupted, or sacrificed to narrow, selfish views, or to mere show, and magnificence;—lest an exclusive attention to the “form of godliness,” should destroy its power and essence. Where a captivating exterior is the *principal* thing, it will soon become *every* thing. If religion, as a spiritual feeling, be so pure, as not to be improved by the innovations of men, why should any attempt to adulterate, to deface, or to amend

the fairest coin of Heaven, till it shall hardly be distinguishable from the production of this world? It is very reasonable to suppose, that, whether Christ will reign *personally* on Earth or not, in the Millennial age, the chief glory of his empire will be it's *holy simplicity*; nor is it just, rational, or consistent, to expect that happy *Æra* at hand, but in proportion as this temper prevails in his kingdom.

## No. IX.

*On the Sacrifice of Christ, considered as a  
Substitution.*

**S**ACRIFICES have universally made so distinguished a figure in all ages, that, perhaps, no nation of any consequence has existed where they may not be traced. Various hypotheses have endeavoured to account for such a general practice; but the most likely, and rational theory, derives it from the Holy Scriptures, where offerings are first mentioned; supposing it to be an imperfect copy of institutions appointed, in the earliest ages, by God himself. This has been argued long ago, very copiously, with much learned effect, by the great THEO. GALE; whose extensive labours modern discoveries have abundantly confirmed.

Sacrifices may be divided into *honorary*,—celebrating the actions of some Deity, or hero, who, after a series of exploits upon Earth, ascended to Olympus among the Celestials;—*supplicatory*; imploring favours;—*grateful*; accompanied with hymns, expressing obligations to the Gods when propitious;—*deprecatory*;

to avert impending dangers ;—and *expiatory* ; to appease, or to atone for offences, real, or imaginary, against angry Divinities. All these distinctions occur, not only in Heathen Mythology, but in the word of the living God. JEPHTHA vowed (whether we suppose that he offered his daughter or not) a grateful sacrifice for victory. BAAL'S prophets invoked him to sanction their delusions ; and the men of Lystra, led by their Hierophant, would have given divine honours to PAUL and BARNABAS. The ancient Jews copied all the rites of Pagans, in all their variety, and malignity ; sacrificing unto “ *all* “ the host of heaven ;” saying, “ we will be as “ the Heathen, as the families of the countries, “ to serve wood and stone. According to the “ number of thy cities were thy Gods, O ! “ Judah.”

That no sacrifices, in profane, or sacred history, are of such importance as expiatory, or atoning ones, appears from their close relation to the Deity, and to Man, an accountable agent, sinning against God. It is also of the highest consequence to observe, that they always necessarily imply *substitution* in the room of another. This is applicable in the

strongest manner to the offering of the Son of God. The common phrases to die "for" one, "for" any, or "for" all, inevitably suppose the victim to die instead of others, who are considered, and treated, in consequence of this substitution, as having themselves made atonement. The God of Justice combined with Mercy, "hath made him who knew no sin, to be sin *for us*; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law; being made a curse *for us*." A striking passage in ancient history will illustrate this subject.

DIONYSIUS, the tyrant of Syracuse, sentenced DAMON to die on an appointed day, and gave him leave to visit his distant friends, only upon a condition which that despot thought impossible to be fulfilled;—that another would remain a hostage in his room, and be liable to die *for him* as his substitute, should he not return within the given period. Such a voluntary substitute was PYTHIAS; who, impelled by the amazing power of disinterested friendship, not only went to prison, but joyfully ascended the fatal scaffold *for DAMON*, whose return was delayed

by adverse winds and waves. DAMON arrived, at last, with the swiftness of lightning, just before the executioner had commenced his bloody task. DIONYSIUS, and his court, evidently considered death in this case, as *vicarious*; for, had PYTHIAS actually suffered, DAMON would on that account, have been spared. A surprising contention between these two friends, which should fall, made such an impression, even upon tyrants, that both were permitted to live, as unparalleled instances of friendship, and of love. The application of this history to the death of CHRIST, so far as relates to his *substitution*, is easy, beautiful, and highly instructive; yet, between these two subjects, there is a remarkable, and essential difference. To spare DAMON and PYTHIAS, was fully consistent with the principles of Justice, and of Mercy. But JESUS must die, or the sinner cannot live. "Without shedding of blood is no remission;" —man must perish.

"Die HE or justice must; unless for him

"Some other able, and as willing, pay

"The rigid satisfaction, DEATH FOR DEATH."

These well-known lines are not more famed for their strength, and beauty, than for their



sound Divinity. When considering the inflexible attribute of Justice, as absolutely essential to the divine Glory, and existence; why should we hesitate to say, that God *could not* pardon sin without atonement? To do this involves a direct opposition to himself; which, with him is wholly impossible. In speaking thus, we do not “limit the Holy one of Israel;” any more than the Scriptures do, when affirming that God “*cannot lie*,”—that “*he cannot deny himself*,”—that he *cannot* love sin. Why cannot he act thus? Because the attributes of righteousness and holiness would be destroyed. In like manner, and for the same reasons, we maintain, that the pardon of sin must imply an atonement; because opposition and contradiction to his own nature, are not among those “all things” which “are possible with God.”

But, as an absolute sovereign, could he not forgive without sacrifice? It seems not. We might as well ask, could he not save the soul without sanctification? Such interrogatories would be endless. Sovereignty must not sit enthroned on the ruins of Justice; and as the perfections of God are not so many separate *parts* of that divine Essence which is one, and

indivisible;—the destruction of any single attribute would be the destruction of all, and the whole Godhead would consequently perish. In the grand scheme of salvation, every attribute must not only shine illustriously, but must also approve of, and join in, the sinner's acquittal. Such an absolute sovereignty as should destroy, or lessen any other attribute;—so far from belonging to JEHOVAH, or being any exercise of the divine power, would be perfect imbecility, and would exhibit the highest degree of unrighteousness. To this we may add, as abundantly confirming our argument;—that, sin, being the most malignant of all evils, and a bold, presumptuous attack upon all the divine attributes, for the purposes of destroying the claims, and the very being of God, must necessarily be punished, either in Christ our substitute, or in the sinner himself, or Justice must needs be dishonoured. Of this, abundant intimations are given in the penal sufferings of the sinner's conscience, and in the numberless miseries of human life. This, so far as we know, seems a rational and scriptural representation; and, on this highly important, and interesting subject, why should we not speak, so far as we know, with reverential fear, and humble decision?

That expiatory sacrifices should be universally considered as substitutes, and that some others imply the same thing, appear from the heart-rending lamentation of King DAVID; without which, it would display no genuine pathos, no parental tenderness, no rational meaning, but much unbecoming absurdity, weakness, and folly. “O my son Absalom! “My son, my son Absalom! Would to God I “had died *for thee*, O Absalom, my son, my “son!” PAUL’S declaration to the ROMANS, exhibits the same views. “Scarcely *for* a “righteous Man will one die: yet, peradven- “ture, *for* a good Man some would even dare “to die. But God commendeth his love to- “ward us, in that while we were yet sinners, “Christ died for us.” The whole Jewish ritual of *bloody* sacrifices also infers substitution; otherwise, how could they afford hope, or consolation to the offerers, or satisfy the claims of Justice, so as to display the mercy of God? A contrary supposition reduces them to a nugatory parade, utterly unworthy of him who appoints nothing in vain;—it would defeat every end for which they were instituted. But, if these types necessarily indicate substitution, much more does that great offering

which they prefigure. The righteous indignation of Heaven against transgression, having a special and exclusive reference to mankind as sinners, is no indiscriminate denunciation without definite objects; and the Saviour's atonement must also have it's objects, and persons in view: for, it being always certain for whom he died, he could not act at random in laying down "his life for his sheep," since he was their *surety*, pledging himself to redeem them, and only them. "I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. The good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

All now advanced is confirmed by the *imputation* of sin and guilt to Christ, our offering, when the Lord "laid on him the iniquities of us all." Justice could not honourably doom him to death without guilt; and guilty he could not be without *imputation*. If what we are, and what we deserve, be reckoned to him in our stead; no imaginable reason can be assigned why, what he has done and suffered, should not, in return, be reckoned unto us. But such imputation cannot possibly result, in either case, without substitution; for these

two things are, in effect, identically the same, and must stand or fall together. “*Surely*, he “hath borne *our* griefs, and carried *our* sorrows: yet we,” not perceiving the doctrine of his *substitution*, “did esteem him stricken, smitten “of God, and afflicted,” for *his own* crimes. But, so far from this, “he was wounded for *our* “transgressions, he was bruised for *our* iniquities: the chastisement of *our* peace was upon “him; and with his stripes we are healed.” He gave “his life a ransom for many.” “It is expedient for us that one man should die *for* the “people, and that the whole nation perish not. “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the “just for the unjust. Who *his own* self bare “*our* sins, in *his own* body, on the tree.” The most general signification of the well-known Greek prepositions used in these, and many other places, is of no small weight in the scale, as abundantly supporting our observations; especially in *St. Paul’s* remarkable words:— “I could wish that myself were accursed from “Christ, *for* my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” Whatever may be the meaning of “accursed from Christ,” in this controverted passage; the doctrine of substitution, being absolutely essential to the Apostle’s

wish and zeal, is too evident to be questioned. On the exact signification of *the phrase*, learned Men have differed much; but, as to the substitution, there has been, so far as I know, only one opinion.

The tenet now maintained, and, it is hoped, fairly, and sufficiently established, being no speculative, trifling point, of slight foundation, but a *fundamental* truth; it is difficult to say, why the ministers of religion, in our day, do not insist upon it with all that earnestness which it demands;—unless it be a sentiment to be rejected as untrue, or exploded as unfashionable, or unwelcome, although supported by such a volume of evidence, as seems amply sufficient to convince every reasonable, and honest mind. To deny the substitution of an atoning sacrifice, is to abandon at once, *in toto*, the sacrifice itself, as useless, and unnecessary; since *that* forms it's very essence;—without which it would become an unmeaning ceremony. Even the religion of Nature, when unadulterated by human sophistry, teaches this;—this is also the Alpha and Omega of the Scriptures. *Other* sacrifices may not always claim, or allow, such a construction; but the grand gospel-offering

excels all others, principally because it is *vicarious*, leading to consequences very great, and extensive, both to God and Man.

In many controversies greatly agitated in the religious world, though perhaps not very recently; this subject has been much overlooked. This has occasioned so much confusion, unholy anger, and endless debate, as to render any amicable agreement impossible. If substitution be admitted as essential to the sacrifice of Christ; it should put an end to every dispute on the meaning of the word "ALL," used in scripture, in reference to this subject. To say that his dying "*for all*" is without limitation, but that his substitution, though universally connected with his death, is restricted to believers, must involve a full contradiction, both in terms and things. It appears equally incongruous to say, that God designed our Saviour's death merely as a general means of our reconciliation without designing any specific substitution; for, to intend one, is to intend the other also; if, as we have seen, substitution be necessarily connected with atoning sacrifice. Reconciliation without substitution seems utterly impossible. The Question is not

whether God, by an act of mercy after the death of Christ, makes that death a substitution to them that believe; but whether his death, as such, must not in all cases be *so* considered; and whether originally he did not *so* intend it, when he “offered himself without spot unto God.”

Should any ask, how far, or to whom, the saving blessings of the Cross really extend; the proper and most direct answer is; they reach so far only as the substitution of Christ in our room: for the extent of these mercies, as to their final, saving effects, and his substitution as the *cause* of such extent, must doubtless be commensurate; or the scheme of salvation would present a confusion like that when “the Earth was without form and void; and “darkness covered the face of the deep.” Christ’s vicarious sacrifice, in it’s original design, and final effects, must be either universal, or particular and restricted. The former necessarily implies an equal substitution, or we must wholly deny the essential character of the sacrifice as vicarious; and to suppose universal substitution, without inferring universal and final *salvation*, is an inconsistency greatly dis-



honouring all the divine attributes, making the doctrine of the Cross a ridicule to the world. This is a knot which has often been rashly cut, with an air of triumph; but it has never yet been patiently untied. For God to exact from a sinner in his own person, what the sinner's surety has previously paid for him, would be monstrous injustice; and to represent God as withholding the blessings justly claimed by substitution, exhibits a libellous caricature of him whose ways are uniformly "just and true." It has already been shown, that forgiveness of sin, without atonement, would sacrifice the justice of God; but to *condemn* a sinner whose substitute has been voluntarily offered up, is to immolate in one general hecatomb, *all* the divine perfections at once: especially if we recollect, that, though a sinner in himself, he is considered in his substitute, as "without spot, or blemish, or any such thing." This condemnation would be utterly repugnant to all rational conceptions of the Supreme Being.

If we say that sinners, by unbelief and rebellion, render their substitute "of none effect;" what is this but suspending the efficacy of the sacrifice upon faith and obedience? What is

this but throwing the blame upon him who stands pledged to “save his people from their sins;”—of course to *subdue* their unbelief and rebellion, out of love and faithfulness to them, and to his own Son, whom he commissioned to die on their behalf, in their room? Holy writ tells us, indeed, how the Cross may, in various ways, be rendered “of none effect;” but it never hints how the *substitution* of Christ on the Cross can be unavailing. These two things, though greatly different, are often confounded. The blessings of Calvary may, by a thousand reasons in the sinner himself, become ineffectual to *him*; but the substitution of Christ, being his own voluntary act, in conjunction with his Father’s commands, can, in no case, be abortive, without entailing everlasting ignominy on the Redeemer. “Who shall separate “us from the love of *Christ*:—For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor *things present*, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able “to *separate* us from the love of God, which “is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

On no other principles but those now asserted,

can the *Divine Equity* be successfully vindicated, when finally condemning the wicked. Banished into future misery, they might ask, "Why do we perish, if Christ died as a sacrifice in our room? Seeing others are saved only because he was their substitute, appointed in sovereign love; we claim our liberty for the same reason, if he be our's also. Our rebellion is no plea against us, nor ought we to be treated as guilty, since the God of Justice, and of Mercy, is bound by our Saviour's vicarious Death, *if he died for us*, and by his own promise as its result, to effect, and to *ensure* our salvation." Such might be their expostulation, and not unjustly. But, if personal redemption, future happiness, and substitution, be *coextended*, a complete answer to such reasoning is readily furnished, by saying, "Your present awful condition proves, that you never properly sought for, nor desired salvation, nor obeyed the gospel of Christ; and these abundantly show, that he never personally died as *your* substitute. Where, then, is your claim, or his dishonour?" Should they presume to ask, Why was he not our substitute? The Scriptures would ask, in return, "O! Man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the

“thing formed say unto him that formed it,  
“Why hast thou made me thus?” O! man,  
“Why dost thou strive against him? For he  
“giveth not account of any of his matters.”

The final *perseverance* of the saints is supported most strongly by this representation of Christ's sacrifice; which is essential to a full defence of that important truth. As he died *for* them, all the honours of Deity stand engaged to bestow their promised rest, as the meritorious reward due to him; and, without his *suretyship*, there can be no certainty at all of their salvation. “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” This intercession must have some plea; and, if it be (as doubtless it is) equal to a claim, that claim must have something in the Intercessor, besides his personal qualities, as it's basis;—nothing less than his substitution. Christ professes to pray only for *his own*. The reason is evident;—he gave himself for them only, and his intercession is founded wholly on his death, and his

substitution, without which it had been vain, and presumptuous. The inseparable connection between his intercession and his engagements to save, appears from his own words. "Father, *I will* that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me. This is the will of him that sent me, that *every one* which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and *I will raise* him up at the last day. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and *I will raise* him up at the last day. Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also *I must bring*, and they shall hear my voice. I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." These words, spoken when our Lord's disciples were already called, cannot refer exclusively to *them*, but must have a general meaning and application.

The doctrine now supported, seems absolutely necessary to true Christian consolation. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and

“ the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the  
“ faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and  
“ gave himself *for me*. There is laid up *for*  
“ *me* a crown of righteousness, which the Lord,  
“ the righteous judge, shall give me at that  
“ day. God hath not appointed us to wrath,  
“ but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus  
“ Christ, who died *for us*, that whether we wake  
“ or sleep, we should live together with him.”

These animated sayings of the Apostle strongly imply substitution, with his firm conviction, that he was one for whom it was made; nor does it appear how solid comfort can result from a mere hope in a general object, without any definite intention, and administration. This powerfully recommends the subject to all who would preach the gospel; for, to tell a promiscuous assembly, of which nine out of ten are in the broad way, that Christ actually died for them *all* without distinction, is certainly speaking farther than we can know, and running much hazard of delusion, if substitution be essential to his death: all having undoubted right to infer from such premises, that they must consequently be saved at all events. In such a congregation, true believers would justly feel encouraged; but, what comforts them

would tend very much to harden the impious. To little purpose should we tell the latter, to save appearances, that Christ's death will avail only to such as believe, and repent; for though this fact be written in Sunbeams, they can reply,—our substitute has bound himself, and his Father also has solemnly promised, to effect all things in us, and for us; we will, therefore, remain "at ease in Zion." Particular, restricted substitution has, sometimes, without a shadow of reason, been accused of an unholy tendency; but the charge comes with some appearance of truth, against such a general redemption as necessarily implies *unlimited* substitution: such doctrine being exposed, without any perversion, or abuse, to the most fatal consequences.

On the other hand; no one who is powerfully alive to practical godliness, as the result of divine agency, connected with unceasing, religious activity on the part of man; can sanction, for a moment, such an exhibition of Christ's substitution, as should leave any room for *Antinomian* inferences, to weaken the bonds of moral obligation. "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid: how

“ shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer  
“ therein? We are buried with him by bap-  
“ tism into death: that like as Christ was  
“ raised up from the dead by the glory of the  
“ Father, even so we also *should walk* in new-  
“ ness of life. Is Christ, therefore, the minis-  
“ ter of sin? God forbid. Do we then make  
“ void the law through faith? God forbid: yea,  
“ *we establish* the law.” No doctrine can be  
“ according to godliness,” or worthy of any  
thing but our execration, which opposes the  
moral government of JEHOVAH. Holiness, in-  
ternal, and external, is the proper evidence that  
Christ died for us. “ If any man have not the  
spirit of Christ, he is none of his ;” nor should  
any presume to suppose that Jesus is actually  
their Saviour, who do not follow his glorious  
example.

With these views, let us “ earnestly contend  
“ for the faith once delivered unto the saints.”  
Our Redeemer’s sacrifice being, of necessity,  
*vicarious*; let his ministers preach it as such,  
not fearing to draw every inference warranted  
by a sentiment, which, so far from being a  
mere subterfuge, to serve, or to save a system;  
constitutes the essential glory of the gospel,



and should never be overlooked by those who would “preach Christ Jesus, and him crucified,” so as to “declare the whole counsel of “God.” Unlike many loose, generalizing systems, calculated, by false appearances, to delude, or to paralyze Mankind; it rouses self-examination, and impels to exertion: and, by banishing the fears of the humble Christian at the close of life, transports him from the cheerless regions of earth and time, to the shining worlds on high.

## No. X.

*On Baptism as founded in the Religion of Nature.*

**T**HE influence of time over men and things, is not less remarkable, than certain, and powerful. It universally extends to mind and matter, with all their modes, movements, and dependencies. One thing there is, which it's utmost attacks cannot reach;—which, being an emanation from the Deity, triumphs in it's own unchanging Eternity;—that one thing is *truth*. This knows “no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” It may be alloyed, or shamefully adulterated; it may be treacherously abandoned, or basely sold; it may be reviled and persecuted; but it cannot be changed. No alchemy can transmute it; the most fiery furnace only purifies it the more. “Waters cannot quench it, nor floods drown it.” Amidst “the wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds,” it will remain “the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.” Yet, though time cannot alter the nature of truth, especially of divine truth; the lapse of years brings to our view many things utterly unknown before, and serves to display, and to

establish, things long since discovered. Their light “shines more and more, unto the perfect “day.” The ordinance of baptism, for instance, as founded in the religion of nature, is one of those subjects, upon which *time* throws new light; and rolling ages dispel some clouds in which it was enveloped.

This subject, which “BUTLER’S Analogy,” and other eminent writings, only casually notice, demands the most extensive research. It is closely related to the baptism of infants, and of Adults; also to the conversion of proselytes from all other religions to Christianity. In fact, it is the turning hinge of the controversy of baptism; and it is rather remarkable, that professed writers, on both sides of the Question, have given it less consideration than it deserves; and that Pædobaptists have not fully availed themselves of *all* that strength which it adds to their cause. The following hints, thrown into the form of general propositions briefly illustrated, are, with much diffidence, and respect, offered to the Public, especially to the friends of Missions among the Heathen, as attempting to elucidate a difficult subject which has, in our age, become highly important, and interesting.

A volume upon it, by some very able writer, would render essential service to the world.

Natural religion, though often maligned, and much oftener extolled beyond it's due merits;—tho' at best, inconceivably inferior to pure Christianity; is, nevertheless, a *sacred* thing, founded in those important relations necessarily, and constantly existing between God, and all accountable agents. Such was the religion of Paradise, before the monster, sin, had laid it waste. It's symbolical test was “the tree of “the knowledge of good and evil;”—it's stimulating reward; “the tree of life,” and that immortality necessarily connected with perfection;—it's temple; the universe;—it's altar; “earth, sea, skies;” it's offerings to the Deity; prayer, praise, devout affections, and holy obedience;—otherwise, *pure morality*. Though, since the fall, natural religion be utterly insufficient to secure, or to promote the present, and future happiness of man; it's duration is eternal, because it's bonds are indissoluble: for we cannot prove it's non-existence, without previously annihilating intelligent beings, and the moral government of JEHOVAH. It is the religion of Angels in Heaven; and, being coeval with Creation, was the first that ever existed.

Conscience is the law of nature;—a principle implanted by the CREATOR in every breast capable of moral good and evil; without which, there can be no accountability; of course, no religion. “There is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding.” Whatever conscience dictates, except when grossly misled by error, or defiled by corrupting passions, is a *moral duty*, enjoined by divine authority; obligatory on all who feel it’s impulse; and, when an intelligent mind perceives *a reason* for any duty by it’s own natural light; that duty becomes a moral institution. Conscience tells Man *what* to do, but not *how* to do it; nor does it afford the power of doing it without supernatural influence, though it may convince him of his insufficiency. Hence, the absolute necessity of positive institutions; of a divine revelation; and of the work of the Holy Spirit. Even CICERO, and others who lived more remote from the Christian æra, had some surprising thoughts of this kind. Speaking of men who were eminent for wisdom and goodness, he says; “*Quorum neminem nisi juvante Deo, talem fuisse, credendum est.*” “*Nemo igitur vir magnus sine aliquo afflatu divino unquam fuit.*”

“We should believe that none of them would have been what they were but by divine assistance.” “Therefore no man was ever great but by some divine inspiration.” **DIODEGENES LAERTIUS**, when recording the aphorisms of **BIAS**, one of the seven sages of Greece, who flourished six hundred years before Christ, makes him speak thus:—“*Quicquid boni egeris, in Deos refer.*” “Whatever good thing thou mayest have done, ascribe it to the Gods.” The sentiment of **PLATO**, as given us by **SENECA**, is still more remarkable. “*Virtus non advenit à natura, neque à doctrina, sed à numine divino. Natura non dat virtutem. Nasci-mur quidè m ad hoc, sed sine hoc.*” “Virtue comes neither from nature, nor from education; but from the Deity. Nature does not give virtue. We are born indeed to virtue; but we are born *without* it.”

Among Heathens destitute of the gospel, where we see deep traces of natural religion, there are no positive institutions, except what their own misguided fancies invent as idolatrous rites. They clearly see a reason, why they, and their offspring, should be devoted to the Deity: but, for want of better light, an

Indian sacrifices his child to Moloch, or throws it into the Ganges. The *professed reasons* of this custom, though the practice be so awfully revolting to the common feelings of humanity, contain in miniature, *the reasons* for the important Christian practice of initiating families, irrespective of their age, rank, or station, into the visible church of Christ, by the ordinance of baptism;—both are a professed dedication to the Supreme Being. Heathens feel the need of some rites, by which to express their sense of natural religion; and each follows his own inclination. Indeed, it is exceedingly natural for them to suppose, that there must be some positive manner in which God pleases to be honoured, in preference to any other: for a religion without some positive ordinance divinely appointed, seems radically defective.

The recent developement of the various religious rites, and superstitions prevalent in HINDOSTAN, discovers an object not only curious, interesting, and wonderful in itself, to the philosopher, the moralist, and the Divine; but one which affords an argument for infant baptism, probably of no mean importance;—an argument which many noted writers have barely

glanced at, and which they could not represent to best advantage, before such discoveries were made, and well authenticated. Why are tens of thousands of the infant race annually sacrificed in the East? Why do martyrs devote themselves as victims to the honours of idolatry? Why are the temples of Heathen worship multiplied without end? Why, in India, is a woman reckoned *infamous*, who shall not cast herself into the funeral pyre of her deceased husband? All these, and many other lamentable things, prove,—that natural religion teaches that all men should live, and die devoted to the Deity;—that especially families, of which infants make an essential part, should be dedicated to their Maker by some *visible* ordinance;—that all the horrors of the most dreadful superstition will not drown the voice of conscience. Nature cannot teach the proper manner of doing these things; but, were this family-dedication transacted in that way which God has now ordained, it would become Christian baptism. When, formerly, some very eminent Antipædobaptists ridiculed the notion, that “infant baptism is a duty which the light of nature and reason teaches;” we remember that little was then known of the religious



state of India, and other parts of the world; and that, through the want of sufficient discoveries, the argument in favour of our position, was not so striking and powerful as now. Infant baptism, so far as *dedication* is concerned, and as a moral duty, *is taught* by the light of nature, and of reason; nor, as to its essence, is it necessarily unknown without a written revelation, as appears from the extensive practice of infant sacrifices, which Heathens consider as a religious duty. Every immolation of this kind seems to intimate, that children should be given to God in a Christian manner, by a Christian institution; for, dedication without some ordinance attached to it, appears vain and nugatory. What can such an ordinance be but baptism?

The Holy Scriptures, and that Christianity which they reveal, *imply* the religion of nature, being evidently founded upon it; and, as BUTLER says, *a re-publication of it.* (1) So far from

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(1) "Christianity is a republication of natural religion.---The law of Moses, and the gospel of Christ, are authoritative publications of the religion of nature.---In proportion as Christianity is professed and taught in the

annihilating, or opposing it, they abundantly confirm all it's dictates, and supply all it's defects. It is a common mistake to suppose, that such as live in a Christian country, enjoying gospel-privileges, are *not at all under* the religion of nature; and Heathens are to be pitied not for living under it, but because they have *no other* superior privileges. "For the  
"Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature  
"the *things contained* in the law; these having  
"not the law, are a law unto themselves, which  
"shew the work of *the law* written in their hearts,  
"their *conscience* also bearing witness, and their  
"thoughts the mean while accusing, or else ex-  
"cusing one another." It is clear from these passages, that natural religion, so far as operating in it's purity, is radically *the same* with that revealed in the scriptures, if it be composed of "*the things contained in the law.*" Therefore, in studying the sacred oracles, we should very carefully distinguish between what belongs to natural religion, and what is matter of pure revelation. Also, in surveying human charac-

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world; religion, natural or essential religion, is thus distinctly, and advantageously laid before mankind." Butler's Analogy. Ch. I. Part II.

ter, we should remember, that a man may have natural religion in a very high degree, who is *no true* Christian, though basking in the glare of gospel-day;—that he may be of great consequence, respect, and eminent usefulness in society, though not belonging to “the household of faith.” Without these distinctions, we shall be exposed to many mistakes, and difficulties. The ordinances belonging to Christianity, unknown in the religion of nature, are Baptism, as to *it's mode and formula only*, and the Lord's supper, as to it's mode, design, occasion, formula, and subjects. Some essential truths, together with prayer, praise, and obedience, are common to both religions, though more clearly revealed, and more powerfully enforced, under the gospel dispensation.

Baptism is a *mixed* institution; partly moral, partly positive. Considered as an act of dedication to God, enjoined by the light of nature, pointing out it's *subjects*, as we have already shown, it is moral;—the manner, or rite itself, in which water is applied by divine authority in the name of Father, Son, and Spirit, is positive. Circumcision, which is superseded by baptism, was an ordinance partly moral, and part-

ly positive. It was appointed to Abraham by divine revelation; but *the reason* of it, viz. dedication to God, was clearly taught by the religion of nature before circumcision was practised. Gentile strangers were admitted into communion with the ancient Jews, by submission to this rite; the *reasons* of which they had previously perceived. Other nations have adopted this custom; but whether from their own unassisted discoveries, or from some traditions connected with the Holy Scriptures, is uncertain.

Although a Christian ordinance, baptism *originates* in the religion of nature; and, in a certain manner, existed before the Christian æra. To deny this origin seems to overturn the foundation of all moral government; for, if conscience do not teach Heathens to give themselves, and their families to the Supreme Being, how can they be accountable for the neglect of that duty? In speaking of baptism, it is of the utmost consequence to distinguish between the ordinance abstractedly, and the manner of it;—the outward ceremony, and the *reasons* of it. *Whether* a thing should be done, and *how* it should be done, are very dif-

ferent questions. As to baptism;—nature solves one of these inquiries, and Christianity the other. It may assist our investigations on this subject to recollect, that, as infant baptism is a dedication to God; *parents* should be considered as the chief actors in the scene; and in that of Adults, for the same reason, *the parties baptized* may most properly be said to perform the act of dedication; the ministers of religion being principally directors, and assistants, in this great work. Hence arises an important distinction between these two baptisms:—one is a *self dedication*; the other, a relative one, performed by our progenitors. The light of nature enjoins, that *both* should be done, and Christianity adds it's more important sanctions

The Lord's supper, if we adhere to BUTLER'S important distinctions, appears to be properly, and *wholly* a positive institution. Nature can perceive *no reasons* for it, till they be revealed in the Scriptures; nor would she ever have discovered either the grand occasion, or the proper subjects of that ordinance;—whereas, in Baptism, she discovers both it's reasons, and it's subjects. All things belonging to the Eucharist,—the participants, the elements, and the

formula, are matters of pure revelation. Jesus Christ, by his own authority, appointed it as a *n<sup>ew</sup>* ordinance; but in baptism, he sanctioned, and finally settled on better grounds, what had previously existed: for, though there are important distinctions between the baptism of John, and Christian baptism; they are radically the same, with few exceptions, as to their occasion, design, subjects, and practical application. The Eucharist, has, doubtless, many important *moral uses*; and, for that reason, might seem to be a moral institution: but so had the pass-over, the brazen serpent, and the cities of refuge, many important moral uses; yet these, according to BUTLER's distinctions, were wholly positive; for what *reason* could an Israelite see for any of these, till it was revealed to him? It is not the *use or tendency* of any institution, that constitutes it to be moral or positive; but the nature and degree of that *evidence* necessary to it's discovery. As nothing of the Eucharist can be known but by revelation, it must, for that reason, be positive, and must require, special evidence for the characters admitted to it. Were it a moral ordinance, in the same sense, as baptism is, every one professing to embrace Christianity would claim admission,

whether truly converted or not; but, as it sustains a character essentially different; we must look for the influence of pure religion, as an essential requisite for communion.

Except when the heart is regenerated, *Proselytism*, though embracing and professing Christianity, goes *no farther* than the religion of nature; for nature teaches, that, if a religion be expressly revealed, it should be embraced. The same may be said of Christian education up from infancy, when not sanctified by the Holy Spirit to effect real conversion; so that if a man, in a Christian country, be not a vital Christian, he stands, as to his general state before God, in the same circumstances as the unconverted Heathens; although, in privileges, accountability, attainments, and many other features of outward character, the difference may be inconceivable. Of whatever external ordinances he may partake, who, though not savingly converted, is born in Christendom, and educated in a Christian manner; Heathens should also partake, when renouncing idolatry; —both profess to obey the dictates of natural religion, as sanctioned by Christianity; and neither of them has proceeded one step beyond.

Can, therefore, either be qualified for the Eucharist, when they have only complied with the dictates of nature? There is no possible medium between the mere religion of nature, and pure, vital Christianity; for, what is not saving grace must be nature; and what is not nature must be saving grace. Every one who is not truly converted, is styled in the Scriptures a "*natural man*;" nor do any advantages enjoyed under the gospel dispensation, or any superiority of intellect, or of refinement, make him otherwise. "That which is born of the flesh, *is flesh*; and that which is born of the spirit, *is spirit*." Even the regular observance of the outward forms of Christianity, when unaccompanied with genuine sincerity, is nothing more than natural religion exhibited in a better manner. To suppose the contrary would greatly dishonour the doctrine of divine influences, by making that which is no true religion to be the production of the holy Spirit.

If baptism be founded in the religion of (2) na-

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(2) The law and light of nature require, and consequently the will of Christ, that Parents should introduce their children to all the privileges of which they are ca-



ture, it may be administered consistently to *all* proselytes, and their infant seed, whether truly converted or not, as seems to have been done in it's original institution. That *all* baptized by the Apostles were not true Christians, appears from the character of Simon Magus ; and it may also be fairly questioned, whether he, and all others *were considered* as possessing real piety ; nor has it ever been clearly proved, that regeneration is essentially necessary to that ordinance. (3) To suppose it absolutely essential as a pre-requisite, is to remove baptism

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pable. As baptism is a benefit applicable to infants, the dictates of nature require our applying it to them.---The dictates of nature, uncontrolled by revelation, are the will of Christ, and our rule of duty. To suppose that, by insisting on the necessary aids of the dictates of nature in the application of the scripture rule in many cases, we derogate from the true perfection of the sacred volume, is a surmise demonstrably weak and impertinent. To reject the conduct of the light of nature is not only foolish, but also **IMPIOUS.**" DR. WILLIAMS ON Baptism ; Vol. 1. p. 219---132

(3) " It is not supposeable that " Jerusalem and all Judea" were deemed by John true penitents ; and the sequel of the history shows abundantly they were not so in fact." DR. WILLIAMS. Ibid. page 287.

*wholly* from the religion of nature, to Christianity exclusively; and promiscuously to admit the unregenerate to the Lord's table, is not only confounding the religion of nature with pure Christianity; but acting also against the plainest rules of scripture, removing the ordinance from Christianity to natural religion, which is highly absurd. But the unregenerate are proper subjects of baptism, unless they deny the religion of nature, by living in idolatry, or in such errors and lusts, as nature condemns; and we must either admit them to it, or deny that the ordinance is founded in the moral government of JEHOVAH. To demand the same requisites for baptism as for the Lord's supper, is to make them *both initiatory* into the visible church;—the consequence of which would be, that all mankind, who had not, either in theory or practice, denied the religion of nature, would have undeniable claim to both. The fair inference from this is, that *Christianity* would have *no necessary connexion* whatever with the Eucharist;—a sentiment which no serious mind can relish.

These statements do not oppose the baptism of *real believers* mentioned in the New Testament,

but rather confirm it. They were not baptized, *merely* because truly converted; but also because they had complied with the dictates of natural religion, in embracing Christianity when revealed; and they were not admitted to the Eucharist, *merely* because baptized as proselytes, but as regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Hence, their character consisted of two parts; one entitling them to baptism;—the other to the Lord's supper. These views of the subject seem most consonant to the moral government of God, and to the holiness of the gospel dispensation. If natural religion be every where interwoven with Christianity, it must have *co-existence*; and what ordinance is so likely to be attached to it as baptism; or how can this ordinance be rationally, or scripturally denied to those who have obeyed it's first dictates, under a dispensation which says, "repent and be baptized?" Believers, in the Apostolic age, when forsaking Judaism, or Paganism, made natural religion a step to Christianity, as is abundantly evident in the history of CORNELIUS, an eminent Gentile, who being "*a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house,*" had carried it to the highest human perfection of which it seems capable. It would be

extremely difficult, if not wholly impossible, to prove, that he was not a proper subject of *baptism* previous to Peter's visit, who declared to him the gospel; yet it is clear he could not properly have received the *Eucharist* at that time. He was *not yet* a believer in the gospel; for he had not heard of Christ; and "how shall they "believe on him, of whom they have not "heard?"

According to the very excellent DR. DODDRIDGE, Cornelius was properly a Gentile, following only natural religion, and not a proselyte to Judaism, in any way, or in any sense;—much less to Christianity, of which he had not yet heard. Peter appears to have been sent by divine direction, not merely to preach the gospel to him, but to administer baptism; Cornelius being *already* a proper subject for *that* ordinance. We are informed, that, at the close of Peter's sermon which Cornelius heard, "the "Holy Ghost fell on *all them* which heard the "word;"—of course, it fell upon the centurion among the rest; and it is rational to suppose, that he was baptized along with them. Peter said, "can any man forbid water, that these "should not be baptized, which have received

“the Holy Ghost as well as we?” By this reception is doubtless meant, as appears from the passage, the miraculous gift of tongues; “for they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.” Now if every one must answer *every part* of the character which these believers sustained, before he can properly be baptized; he must possess *miraculous gifts* as a requisite. On these principles, since such miracles have ceased, baptism would be impossible. It seems, therefore, that the faith of these believers in Christ, and their wonderful gifts, were an *additional reason* for their baptism, rather than essential to that ordinance; for the reception of Christianity is an undoubted, and superior evidence, that the religion of nature has been duly regarded,—that it has operated with all it’s possible energy.

We have consequently no right to infer, if the above reasoning stand good, that *none* but real believers in Christ should be baptized, because *such* were baptized by the Apostles; any more than we can infer, that *none* but persons of miraculous gifts should be baptized, or that the unregenerate should not worship God, because real believers are commanded to do so,

or because the Apostles baptized those who had miraculous gifts. Whether *any besides* real believers should be baptized, can never be determined by proving that *such* believers were baptized;—the questions involve subjects totally different, and not necessarily bearing upon each other. But, if any claim the privilege of baptism, who have merely complied with the dictates of natural religion; much more do they claim it, when brought experimentally to know the truth. If regeneration be not essential to infant baptism, as all Pædobaptists allow; why should it be supposed needful in Adults, or how can it be inconsistent to baptize Heathens professedly renouncing idolatry, though that renunciation may not be the genuine work of the Spirit? Adult-baptism *does* require what that of infants *does not*; but we cannot infer, that regeneration is necessary to either. To plead for it in one case, and to deny it in another, is changing the very nature of the ordinance of baptism; and transfers it from the religion of nature wholly to Christianity, to and fro, without cessation.

If baptism, though more clearly revealed, and more powerfully sanctioned under the Christian dispensation, nevertheless, belong

primarily to the religion of nature; it can confer no claim to the Eucharist, which is, in every sense, exclusively a Christian ordinance. An infant has no such claim, whether baptized or not; nor have Adults, for the same reasons, except when regenerated;—to allow it in one case, must infer it also in the other. Even when real believers are baptized, their right to the Eucharist is not founded on their baptism, but on their regeneration; so that it is not easy to perceive any sufficient reasons, why our honoured Missionaries should defer the baptism of proselytes from idolatry, whether such be truly pious or not; much less do we see how they can admit any to the Eucharist who do not give satisfactory evidence of real Christianity. We highly admire their caution, and their prudent fear of doing wrong; but, why any embarrassment should occur in this affair, is not easily imagined. The path of duty seems clear and straight. The two ordinances, being perfectly distinct, demand different requisites; but, if once they be confounded, and supposed to be essentially connected, perplexities arise without end;—we enter without a clue, “*the labyrinth of Crete:*” missions are encumbered with difficulties, and the kingdom of Christ is impeded in it’s Almighty career.

It is highly desirable, that Christian missions should be fully vindicated against all possible objection. Objections *will arise* in the minds of those who love not the souls of men; and, though *silence* is the only treatment which some of them deserve; yet, if an answer can be given to others which claim our notice, it should not be withheld. It is humbly hoped, that the above remarks may possibly serve to remove objections which might arise from any appearance of *inconsistency*; and to afford some plain directions to those invaluable men, of every denomination, who bear, or may hereafter bear, the precious name of JESUS to the Gentiles. To their candid attention they are respectfully submitted, by a sincere friend to the cause; who, so far from assuming the office of censor, or dictator, would gladly learn of others, whether, or not, he has advocated the cause of truth. From his childhood, he has been nurtured in those principles necessarily connected with Christian missions; and it has long been his delight to teach unto others, especially to the rising generation under his personal care, those things which he hopes never to abandon.



## No. XI.

*On Integrity in Sentiment and Criticism.*

**H**ONESTY is a moral virtue universally admired, and applauded; but, when we apply the term exclusively to *the mind*, it is transferred from a moral, to a *religious* meaning. It then becomes more immediately an affair between God and our own souls; yet, a failure in this is not generally considered so criminal as defrauding our neighbour of his earthly possessions. This absurdity is, perhaps, partly owing to our attending more to exterior actions, and their results, than to the various, and less discernible operations of the human intellect. The former are easily seen, and felt;—the latter are not perceived without nice observation, and laborious research. But, in the sight of him “who searches the heart;” *intellectual fraud* is as obnoxious as any other moral evil; and, at his tribunal, punishable in the same manner.

The decided integrity now under consideration, supposes that the mind has embraced the truth; and it stands opposed to such as are of

*no sentiment, or of all*; which two things, though apparently contradictory, are, in effect, one and the same. To be “tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine,” is a most unhappy state; incompatible with real tranquillity. Such are more to be pitied than blamed, if they be searching after truth; but to be *of all sentiments*, is the highest hypocrisy to which man can attain. On the other hand, decision bears not the most distant resemblance to unholy bigotry, foolish conceit, or blustering noise;—these result from criminal selfishness, ignorance, pride, or from other causes still more objectionable.

The powerful voice of Scripture often enforces a firm attachment to the truth;—this shows the necessity and importance of clear, and settled views. “Take *fast hold* of instruction, let her not go; keep her; for she is thy life.—Let not mercy and *truth* forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart.—Buy the truth and sell it not.—Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.—Let us hold fast the profession of *our faith* without wavering.—*Continue* thou in the things which thou hast learn-

“ed, and hast been assured of, knowing of  
“whom thou hast learned them.—Brethren, be  
“not children in understanding: howbeit, in  
“malice be ye children, but in understanding,  
“be men.”

To embrace a sentiment, or a system, only because a favourite author, or an intimate friend, has originated, or defended it; however high such may rank as to learning, talents, wisdom, piety, and usefulness; is great injustice to them, to ourselves, and to *GOD*. They may be right, or they may be wrong; but to take them implicitly as a standard, is to make them *infallible*;—this is the true spirit of that mental degradation so visible in the Church of Rome. A man who values divine truth, receives no *ipse dixit*, unless from the SUPREME BEING, and to this he bows, whether he perceive a reason or not beyond bare assertion. The BEREANS are styled “*noble*,” for not receiving the gospel even on the authority of inspired Apostles, and for practically claiming the right of private judgment. PAUL openly disclaims every thing like a surrender of this privilege. “I speak as  
“to wise men: *judge ye* what I say.” JESUS CHRIST also forbids us to sacrifice it to mortals.

“Call no man your Father upon the earth: for  
“one is your Father, which is in heaven.—  
“One is your Master, even CHRIST.” A pecu-  
liar sentiment may be palatable, or fashiona-  
ble, in certain places, companies, and connex-  
ions; or in a certain æra of time. This may be  
a strong temptation to imbibe it, even without  
examination; but no honest man should be  
ashamed of singularity where his mind cannot  
freely, and fully comply. His conscience must  
not be an object of sale, or of barter. The  
work of temporizers is ever changing;—never  
done; and their rewards are a worthless recom-  
pense for their pains.

This prevailing partiality is sometimes car-  
ried so far, as to allow, and to condemn, *the*  
*same sentiment* proceeding from different men;  
so that, what is truth from one, is counted  
error from another: whereas, perhaps, all the  
difference in the men is their age, or station in  
the church; and, in some instances, there are  
not even these variations. Should they belong  
to different communities, this is no excuse for  
the practice; but it very frequently occurs  
among those of the same denomination. The  
venerable years and superior wisdom of some,

may justify them in saying what would come from a young man with an ill grace, or with imprudence; yet the *truth or falsehood* of a thing, cannot be influenced by such circumstances. The prudence, and the truth of a saying are two things, utterly unconnected; and a man of integrity will receive the truth by whomsoever declared; knowing that the same joyful sound of the *Jubilee*, proceeded from silver trumpets, and from ram's horns;—that the Prince of darkness sometimes speaks the same things as the Angels of light;—as God himself. The *medium* through which truth is conveyed resembles an echo, the reverberation of which must correspond with the sound that causes it, whether in the dome of ST. PAUL'S; in the famous Gothic chapel at PAISLEY; or in the scenery of a country where this phænomenon occurs.

The stubborn pride of the human heart often resists powerful convictions; refusing to acknowledge the truth when really persuaded of it. “Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your Fathers did, so do ye.” If a disputant, when conquered in fair argument, whether the contest be secretly in his own mind, or openly

with his fellow-men, feel himself overcome; honesty should lead him to surrender honourably, like a soldier on the field of battle, if he wish, in future, to be treated with respect. “*To conquer or die,*” is no praise-worthy motto in controversy; nor does it display any rational courage. It is a cowardly weakness, utterly unworthy of a sensible man. But, “*to conquer or yield;*” being real, christian heroism, should be every one’s motto; and we should learn so much magnanimous integrity as to say,—*I mistake.* To resist, when we feel our error, is adding falsehood to deceit, and opposes him who is “the God of truth.” When contending with our fellow-men, we oppose *them* only, if not convinced of their statements; but to hold out when conviction has taken place, is to be in arms against *Omniscience*: and, so far from being a recommendation, it covers us with guilt and ignominy. In the sight of God it must be a great sin; for why has he endowed us with reason and conscience, but that their dictates may be strictly obeyed? An honest infidel (if infidels can be honest in avowing their principles) is less blameable, and less guilty, than he who will not acknowledge those truths which have gain-

ed the secret assent of his own mind. "He has denied the faith, and is *worse* than an infidel."

All languages being more or less ambiguous, contain many words and phrases of doubtful, double, or manifold signification. If a writer, or a declaimer, be not an honest man, he may be tempted and ensnared to use words, the usual, popular meaning of which, he may admit or deny, as best suits his convenience. His warfare will be all dark stratagem, and lurking ambuscade, without any fair, open, bold contest. Like **FABIUS MAXIMUS**, when at war with the famous **HANNIBAL**, he will continually harrass his opponent, and himself, without any advantage to either. The man of integrity disdains all such mean artifice, as utterly below his honour. Should he use an ambiguous word, or expression; he explains in *what sense* he uses it; and from this he never wilfully departs. He will not lay hold on such expressions from another, in a sense which he evidently did not intend, merely to expose and ridicule him. In his estimation, banter and wit are not argument. He is a fair and open combatant; who, when he accepts a challenge, mi-

nutely observes all the laws of war. He never fights with phantoms, or shadows, of his own creation : at least, if he ever be so far deluded, he laments his misfortune ; and, the moment it is discovered, he instantly abandons the conflict.

It is sometimes a daring practice to expunge a verse, a section, a chapter, or a whole book of Scripture, when they make against a favourite system. This is often done without sufficient cause, or without any ;—then, it becomes directly opposed to real integrity. What would be said of a critic who should take such liberties with the works of CICERO, TACITUS, or LONGINUS ? It is readily allowed, that many parts of our common version are not agreeable to the most ancient and most authorized copies of the original ; and, for that reason, call loudly for improvement. We are also greatly indebted to the labours of many ancient and modern critics in this way, and should allow their judgment all it's due. When an alteration in our received version is made with much wise caution, by a man of acknowledged learning, piety, and integrity ; possessing peculiar talents, and superior advantages for the work ;—when



it is the result of much deliberation, diligent comparison of manuscripts and parallel passages ;—when the grammar, the connexion, the general “analogy of faith,” and the universal tenour of Scripture, evidently bear it out, and call for it ;—when it is not done from wanton caprice, an ostentation of learning, or to serve a system, but to promote the purity of Christian knowledge, the edification of the Church, and the glory of God ;—let it be much esteemed, and readily adopted, as an important acquisition. Religious integrity demands this. The Bible may suffer from *empirics* ; but from impartial criticism it has nothing to fear. The Greek and Roman *Classics* have their various readings in abundance, and learned men differ much, both as to the genuine text, and as to the sense of particular passages ; yet they still retain their value. Emendations, scholia, and commentaries, though increasing in every age, have not lessened, but much enhanced, their estimation. No one but an *ignoramus* disputes their authenticity, and their general beauty is unimpaired.

But, do these things sanction an unbounded license in treating the sacred records, as if

every would-be-critic had a right, like a scavenger in our public streets, to sweep away, at his pleasure, whatever may offend him? What can we think of a man, who, because a portion of Scripture is liable to dispute, and has been occasionally controverted by the learned, as to its authenticity, with very slight arguments against it, takes upon him hastily, but peremptorily, to pronounce it contrary to truth, and unworthy of God? Such an one should remember what LONGINUS says,—“that true criticism is the last offspring of long experience.” DR. JOHNSON calls it, “the daughter of labour and of truth.” Every honest man lays aside, and forgets his system, while rigidly examining with fear and trembling, whether a word or a passage be interpolated, or the error of transcribers, or unworthy of a place in sacred writ. If possible, he will decide in the negative. Hasty, and repeated alterations without any just grounds, or from very slight ones, tend to universal scepticism; as repeated acts of dishonesty, and *petit larceny*, constitute finally the general robber.

Nor is the custom less to be condemned, of founding an argument, or a system, on a single

passage of Scripture, forcibly wrested from it's proper connexion,—as a splinter from a rock. A context generally gives the whole sense, and the only *true one*;—so that to decide upon a meaning without regarding the general *scope* of a place, leads to the greatest absurdities. By such a method, we might apparently support Atheism, Deism, superstition, and immorality;—the Bible might be impiously pressed into the cause of Satan. *Forcing* a criticism, or a translation of a place, which the connexion will not bear, though the word, or phrase, abstractedly, may fully convey the intended meaning, is contrary to all the dictates of integrity; for every one knows, that no sentiment can be an Author's meaning, which evidently contradicts his general views and reasoning. Should a man treat the works of human learning in this way, he would be branded with dishonesty, or pitied for his weakness, if not despised as unworthy of regard. Connexion is like the pole star to a translator; of which, if he lose sight, his wanderings are endless.

All argument, whether true or false, is built upon some *data*. A fair reasoner keeps to his premises, and will sooner lose his cause than

desert them. But a disingenuous mind is perpetually changing them, and is like the sands in the deserts of Africa, altering the whole face of things, and surrounding us with dust;—this is called *sophistry*; and is connected with that species of cunning, next to absolute, and universal hypocrisy. We never know when we have such a man safe; for, as is said of one in MR. BOSWELL'S life of DR. JOHNSON, “if you get him into a corner, he dexterously leaps over your head and escapes.” A man of integrity may, without intention, change his data; yet, as he is unconscious of it, we must allow the oversight to be no dishonourable impeachment:—it is done wilfully, and deliberately, by an unfaithful man. He resembles a military hero, who, in the hour of battle, fearless of consequences, assumes any positions, and adopts any expedients, for the sake of victory:—of his manœuvres, there is no end; because his aim is destruction.

Frequently a system rests on a single sentiment as it's main support;—a sentiment, perhaps, very doubtful in itself; but, whether true or false, leading to most extensive, logical results. It's author has previously to establish

this foundation, lest his whole fabric should fall; and, if there be any probability of success, so as to aid the cause of truth, his endeavours are commendable. But, when the contrary is very apparent; what honest man would sacrifice his time, his strength, his talents, and perhaps his health, to maintain an uncertainty, merely to gain a favourite object? If he wished to build a house on a particular site, he would do well to seek a sure foundation, with peculiar pains and skill; yet, if, after repeated efforts, he fail in doing it, prudence would direct him to try elsewhere. Alas! rather than renounce a darling system, many have sacrificed the essentials of religion, and become deaf to the voice of reason.

With minds of a certain cast, a firm adherence to the truth, even when sincerely embraced, is very difficult. They are over-fearful of giving offence; which occasions them to shrink, to soften, and to accommodate things to the prejudices of men without limitation. Such want courage and decision, when circumstances demand them. An honest mind can say, "I have not shunned to declare unto you *all* the counsel of God.—I have preached righteousness

“in the great congregation: Lo! *I have not refrained* my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. “I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.” This laudable integrity does not require a man to treat with derision, or disrespect, the feelings of human nature, or the peculiar circumstances of the age, or place, in which he lives: nor does it necessarily confine him to a *favourite doctrine*, or theme; as if ministerial faithfulness were not consistent with boundless variety;—as if “a preacher of righteousness” ought to resemble a set of bells, which can ring only a *certain number* of changes, a number easily ascertained;—or a hand-organ, with it’s round of tunes mechanically placed, and which can play *no other*. Yet, there are seasons when a man is obligated by all the laws of consistency, of honour, of conscience, and of God, explicitly to avow what he thinks;—“to speak the truth; *the whole truth*; and nothing but the truth;”—to be firm and unshaken, as “the pillars of Hercules” amidst raging waves, and conflicting tempests.

Let us “become *all* things to *all* men,” except by dishonesty of mind. Truth has a dress of it’s own, in which *it will appear*;—without which it becomes disfigured, if not disgraced. Having no natural relish for *uncouth* raiment, it allows of ornament, simple, grave, and dignified; but, when any attempt so far to adorn it for mere show, as to make it appear out of character, and essentially different from what it really is:—truth disdainfully tears in pieces such frippery-attire, as unsuitable to it’s venerable antiquity. It will often put on (who shall forbid it?) the most polished language, the finest allusions, the most striking comparisons, and the most dazzling colours. It delights in all the charms of genuine oratory; but an endeavour to amend, or to alter, it’s *shape and form*, is more sacrilegious than an attempt to reverse the laws and appearances of nature. Although it can allure highly-cultivated minds by every exterior grace; the robes in which it appears most frequently as it’s own, and as most becoming, are those of plain argument and demonstration;—robes in which it is usually arrayed by the hands of God. Wishing to copy after such an example, a man of integrity will not allow it to appear in any dress which

might seem to threaten it's beauty, honour, or welfare;—he knows, that if truth do not make it's way chiefly by it's own native lustre, all the ornaments in the world will not certainly, and effectually, secure it's promotion. ARTHUR WARWICK says, in his “Spare Minutes;” a work very curious and valuable, printed in 1637, the *orthography* of which is here retained;—“I would not have the pearle of Heaven's “kingdom so curiously set in gold, as that the “art of the workman should hide the beauty of “the jewell: nor yet so sleightly valued as to “be set in lead: or so beastly used as to be “slubbered with durt. I know the pearle (how- “ever placed) still retaines it's virtue, yet I had “rather have it set in gold than seek it in a “dunghill.”

Much as we admire genuine integrity of mind, it is exposed to many serious difficulties, and dangers; and is sometimes more condemned than approved. He who eminently possesses it, is, by superficial observers, often considered as unsocial, illiberal, and austere, because he cannot bend to every storm, if he be not unjustly feared, and persecuted, as a common enemy. His manner of conversation, and of



writing, is liable to misconstruction, from causes, which, unfortunately, he cannot control. He is often suspected of being angry, and of designing insult, when no such feeling is near him. His character is unhappily exposed to much misunderstanding, and unmerited censure, because it is impossible to ascertain the springs of his actions without diligent attention. One principle actuates him in every scene;—his inflexible integrity; and, what others, through mere ignorance, may ascribe to the worst of motives, arises from the operations of conscience in the sight of God, and from the noblest dictates of religion.

Owing to the intensity of their feelings, such men are continually in danger of being overheated in a good cause, and, perhaps, speak too hastily, and abruptly; for they must speak and write *as* they think, though they may not tell *all* they think; or their tongue would cleave to the roof of their mouth, and their pen would drop, probably with a loss to Mankind, from the writer's palsied hand. Having in themselves no power to dissemble, they abhor deceit in every shape and form;—most of all in religion. Their zeal against hypocrisy urges

them to speak without properly regarding, or even thinking of, consequences. Though this may be their failing; it is a failing generally connected with many great virtues; and when, as is sometimes the case, it is essential to true honour, it ceases to be a frailty. As their excellencies do not readily appear; they must be long known to be much esteemed; but, when once properly known, they improve on our hands, so as effectually to secure our recommendation. In such characters, integrity will atone for many defects. It also confers a peace of mind "which passeth all understanding;" and, however it may be rejected by men, it is, in the sight of God, "a pearl of great price."

## No. XII.

*On some causes of Disunion among Christians.*

“**I**T is not good that man should be alone.” He is made for society, as appears from his powers of reason and of speech, his passions, his countenance, and his instincts;—absolute, constant solitude produces misery and ruin. In an eminent manner, religion is connected with this social disposition; and, when operating with it’s full power, never fails to produce it, by calling into proper exercise all the friendly affections of the human mind. “I was glad  
“when they said unto me, *let us go* into the  
“house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand  
“within thy gates, O ! Jerusalem.—Come ye,  
“*let us go* up to the mountain of the Lord, to the  
“house of the God of Jacob.” In the Jewish captivity, “they that feared the Lord spake often one to another;” and immediately after the Pentecost, “*all* that believed were together, and had all things common.” In the present day, Christian union and fellowship are evidently, and rapidly increasing, to the great joy of every zealous man;—yet much remains to be done before all be “of one heart, and of one

soul." Fully to accomplish this, should be the aim of "every one that names the name of Christ;" and it may possibly tend to effect such a desirable object, if we consider, What are the causes of *disunion* among Christians?

*Local circumstances* may be a barrier. In some districts, population is very widely scattered, and religious professors more widely still;—there, the ministers of the sanctuary are hid in corners, far remote from each other. In such situations, though individuals may associate; they must necessarily move in a narrow sphere, not at all answering to the enlarged wishes of Christian zeal. Distance may hinder actual communication; and, for a long time, may separate "chief friends." Conversation may but seldom occur, and a religious interview may become a phænomenon. This we must deplore as a misfortune, and we must be content to improve what advantages we have;—hoping for better days. Yet, to the great honour of religion, we have occasionally known the true spirit of Christian union, though on a confined scale, where mountains, rivers, and barren wastes, have appeared to cut off much

general communication with mankind.—

“ Far from the madding crowd’s ignoble strife :

“ Their sober wishes never learn to stray ;

“ Along the cool, sequester’d vale of life

“ They keep the noiseless tenour of their way.”

Much diversity exists in the natural *temper* of men. Some are evidently more formed for society than others ; and, being more *tangible*, are readily drawn into union, and into action. Some want more of an accommodating disposition, though they be not absolutely unsocial ; and cannot be secured without many arguments, deliberations, and proposals. They are heavy bodies, requiring great power and much art to move them ; like the masses intended for a great building, which seem desirable and necessary for it’s completion. This want of sociability may be their misfortune,—the result of their natural constitution, of their education, and of the sphere in which they have long moved ; or it may arise from an excessive fear of encountering difficulties. From whatever cause originating, it is a most injurious thing ; and necessarily prevents all co-operation with others in doing good. Yet, surely, this evil is not beyond remedy. A temper which, from

many mysterious causes, is naturally unsocial, may be so cultivated as to promise much improvement; and if religion operate in its proper, and wonted manner, it will overcome those obnoxious feelings which are barriers in the way of Christian fellowship. If, through the power of divine grace, a covetous man may become liberal; a dishonest man, just; an intemperate man, sober; a passionate man, kind and gentle; a sensual man, spiritually-minded;—why may we not hope that an unsocial man should become all that can be wished?

Sometimes *sentiment* unfortunately prevents union. There is a sentiment, or rather a system, which by its native tendency would destroy all religious society;—at least, in any extensive manner. It is *falsely called* CALVINISM; and consists chiefly in representing the Deity as a potter who has such “power over the clay,” as to make vessels according to his sovereign pleasure,—then to dash them in pieces without the least regard to *any fault in them*, and merely because he will. This dreadful scheme supposes, that sinners who finally perish, are not condemned for their voluntary unbelief and rebellion; but that they disbelieve and rebel

because they are *condemned already* ;—that sin is the effect of ruin ; not ruin the natural consequence of sin. Who does not shudder at such representations ? Who does not see what disorder they introduce into the moral government of JEHOVAH,—how they render it's vindication impossible ? Is it any wonder that those who can vouch for such a libel on the Divine character, should possess little social feeling for their fellow-men ; or that reflecting minds should hesitate to be enrolled amongst them ? In their forbidding aspect, they seem to be a copy of that Deity whom they thus describe. Hence they generally stand aloof from all union, except with their own *caste* ; and towards them, it is feared, they do not exhibit much of the genial, and benevolent spirit of the peaceful Gospel.

This view of the Divine procedure in reference to perishing sinners, has sometimes been very unjustly imputed to *others* who hold it in abhorrence ; and where no such thing has been imputed, or suspected ; a difference in opinions on this, and other subjects connected with it, has often prevented many good, and worthy men from knowing each other better,

and loving each other more. They have appeared rather as "strangers and foreigners," than as "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of "the household of God." A bare *report* of one man's imbibing a particular sentiment highly obnoxious to another, has marked him out as surrounded with an atmosphere containing "the pestilence that walketh in darkness, "and the destruction that wasteth at noon-day:" till, perhaps, a mere accident has happily brought different parties together, and scattered every fear, by exciting much mutual surprise that they should so long have maintained their distance. The *essential* doctrines of religion, are, indeed, so important, and so powerful in their operations on the conscience, as to render any extensive, profitable union among those who admit, and those who deny the same essentials, absolutely impossible in the nature of things. Who could rationally expect much union in such circumstances, among conscientious and upright men? But as there are so many things *not* essential to salvation, (sentiments on the divine decrees are surely of this class) why should these be like the Chinese wall to separate numerous bodies of Christians from each other; as if any soci-



ety which was truly religious, could be like hordes of TARTARS ready to pillage and to devour their neighbours?

If, in the ordinance of baptism, one thinks an infant a proper subject; and another, Adults only; if one thinks that water applied in *any* mode, or in *any* degree, is baptism, and another will have a *bath* for immersion;—if one applies water to the subject, and another applies the subject to the water;—if one holds the five points as CALVIN, and another as ARMINIUS explains them;—if one befriends presbyterian discipline, and another loves a free, open, general, popular, unembarrassed management of things, so far as the Scriptures allow;—if one thinks that a form is of great use, if not absolutely necessary to suitable, and acceptable prayer, and another feels that any form is a real hinderance to his devotion;—why should these things prevent unity in plans to do good? We may ask with much propriety, “What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion hath light with darkness? What concord hath Christ with Belial? What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” But, where essentials

are not in the way, and yet union does not occur; it is like asking the singular questions,—What fellowship hath righteousness with righteousness? What communion hath light with light? What concord hath Christ with Christ? What part hath he that believeth with a believer? What agreement hath the temple of God with itself?

Ambition, or love of power, is more prevalent in some minds, than the love of money, or of any other earthly good. Even our Lord's immediate followers were so far ensnared as to contend "which should be greatest." If a man's motto be, on all occasions,—"*Aut Cæsar, aut nihil;*"—if he will espouse no measures which he does not originate;—these things will greatly hinder religious union; especially where numbers fall a prey to this reigning foible. This thirst for pre-eminence is very strongly condemned in the scriptures; particularly in the character of **DIOTREPES**; and is contrary to all the dictates of pure religion, as it also exhibits some of the worst principles of the human heart. Suppose, that, in worldly things, this line of conduct were pursued;—what would be the result? If all would

be architects, and none labourers, where would be the building? If all would be commanders, and none seamen to work the vessel, when would she circumnavigate the globe? If all would usurp the throne, what would become of the empire? But if a man of genius be an architect;—a man of courage a naval commander; and a man of dignity, wisdom, honour, and clemency, be placed on a throne; all others being subordinate in various gradations, without any tyrannical oppression,—the world moves on in beautiful order.

So in religion, some being endowed with superior gifts, wisdom, address, and influence, appear calculated and destined to guide others, who should think it no degradation to follow, so far as prudence dictates; especially when they have chosen their own leaders. In an army renowned for unity and valour, privates often urge their commanders to lead them forward to action, and to victory, with an ardour not to be repressed; nor are they overlooked when rewards are distributed. In the army of THE LORD OF HOSTS, let no officer act unworthily: and let none in a more private station hesitate to follow where superior wisdom, cou-

rage, and discretion, mingled with friendly condescension, summon us to go;—let us all fear the curse of MEROZ. “Whosoever will be *great* among you, let him be your minister. And whosoever will be *chief* among you, let him be your servant.—In honour preferring one another —In lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than himself.” In the itinerant labours of the Apostles, “Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and *went not with them to the work.*”

There is a disposition, the *reverse* of that just now described. Many are ready to serve the cause of religion in any *private capacity*; but will not be “anointed with the oil of gladness above their fellows,” though every one sees how highly they are qualified for eminent distinction. They are too modest, too lowly, and too timid; or to speak more properly, they have certain dispositions lovely in themselves, but, owing to their excessive and ill-directed operations, they become less useful than might be expected. This is their misfortune, and also

the misfortune of many others who suffer in consequence. Perhaps they have long served the cause of religious benevolence in a private station ; and who are so likely to make useful leaders as those who have first learned to follow ? For their encouragement, let them be told, that their fears are imaginary,—that duty calls them to a more public sphere ;—that if their difficulties and responsibility increase, their rewards will be glorious. Little societies, or those in their infancy, want some one to go in and out before them, as their Father and their Friend, to be as a common bond of union to the whole. For this purpose, let them seek out a suitable man ; and, like the ancient Romans, who suddenly and unanimously called CINCINNATUS from the pursuits of agriculture to the dictatorship, let them not be overcome by the expostulations of him who wishes to avoid such a scene of distinguished labours.

But when a religious society is first raised, there is frequently a universal dread lest any of them should seize the reins, and become “lords over God’s heritage ;”—without any just cause, fearful jealousy of religious despotism is the order of the day. They are for an equal-

ity, where *all* must rule, yet none must lead ;— a pure *republic*, where power, influence, and activity, are to be utterly unknown ! This is a foolish chimera ; no society having ever existed to any good purpose on such principles,—not even the deepest democracies. It is an extreme directly opposite to one before noticed, though producing exactly the same effect ; for, to make all leaders or none, will equally produce a stagnation of affairs, by rendering exertion impossible. In our domestic circles, in commerce, in politics, in all associations, some *must preside*, or the world would be at a stand, if anarchy did not destroy it. The most unenlightened nations have so much acuteness as to see, that without proper leaders they are nothing ; and, in religious communities, some must move first, in obedience to the call of their fellows, and occasionally *before* that call, so far as to make proposals, or nothing will be accomplished worthy of so noble a cause.

There is a disposition in the human breast called *envy*,—a feeling too odious to be fully described. It's influence is mighty and overwhelming. " Wrath is cruel, and anger is out-

rageous ; but who is able to stand before envy ?” It seems to have been the first crime of the angels who fell. It is a secret, besetting sin among mortals, and continually torments its possessor, operating also upon others to an unlimited extent,—“ a root that beareth gall and wormwood.—The poison of asps is under its lips.”—It turns “ judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock.” It cannot bear another’s superiority, and will not be allied to that which gives it so much uneasiness. One would hardly suppose that such a monster could exist in a renewed mind. But, Alas ! something like this may occasionally invade the bosom of a good man, and may hinder his association with others. In a real Christian, its operations are imperceptible, and so subtle, that he may not be conscious of it, and others may not suspect it. Oh ! let us beware of such a detestable companion ; such a destroyer of our peace ; such a worm at the root of all our comforts ; such a resemblance to him whose character is an assemblage of all evil, and the absence of all good.

Some renowned Heathens have been remarkable for their happy exemption from this obnox-

ious feeling. How we admire the magnanimity of PÆDARETUS, the famous Spartan, who, having lost his election for one of the three hundred, rejoiced that there were three hundred better than himself found in the city! Much more will a Christian, when delivered from such a feeling as envy, “rejoice with them that “rejoice:” and, so far from the superiority of others deterring him from union; he considers it an honour to join them. If he feel, and deeply lament, his own inferiority; it produces *humility*, a sensation very different from envy; and superiors are the very men whom he searches out for his colleagues. “I am a companion of *all* them that fear the Lord.”

When opinions *pro* or *con*, though expressed with suitable deference, and from the purest motives, are not allowed to pass freely without giving *offence*, union is much retarded. When extensive plans of operation are introduced, it is not very probable, that, in a large body, unanimity should always occur; and one or two dissenting voices may claim regard, though a majority should always rule the scene. But, if the former be treated with apparent *contempt*, as if guilty of some high treason; and if fair



discussion be not suffered; a spirit of opposition and disunion is excited. A man who has had the misfortune to differ from a majority, might, perhaps, have easily been won by a little more persuasion; but having been treated as an *out-law*, he is "a brother offended," and "harder "to be won than a strong city." On the other hand,—where things have been regularly, and fairly conducted; a man should always bow to a majority, at least as to active measures, though his private *opinion* may still be retained, or he is justly chargeable with *schism*. However fair discussion may be desired, none should plead for stupid tenacity; and practically to oppose the decisions of a general body, without any just cause, and without answering any valuable purpose, seems contrary to every temper which should animate the Christian's breast. Let majorities rule, and let minorities be respected.

The invaluable, sacred privilege of private judgment concerning men and things, has frequently, by abuse, degenerated into habitual *ensoriousness*. It is allowed, that, in some instances, we are unhappily called upon to show marked disapprobation of measures evidently

not calculated for general good; but, we should be *slow* to judge, *slower* still to condemn, and *slowest* of all to make an occasional mistake a pretext for disunion. If an individual, or a committee of management, act according to the best of their judgment, and of their means; we should give them credit for diligence and good motives, and should cast the mantle of love over a failing or two counterbalanced by a series of signal and successful services. Our Lord uniformly bore his testimony against rash and severe judgment. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Such a disposition to censure, has produced the loss of many a zealous friend to religion and morality; and has deterred many from closer union, who otherwise might have shone as lights in their generation. Let us approve and sanction *wholly* where we possibly can: also *as far* as we can when every measure meets not our approbation.

Union is impeded by a strange resolution to give *no opinion* of men and things,—to observe a uniform and perfect neutrality, with a

view to escape that blame which, it is supposed, must fall somewhere when measures do not answer expectations. This over-cautious disposition is often combined with a natural meekness; but may also be the companion of stupidity. It is very difficult to be managed. We scarcely know whether it be friendly, or not, to any measures proposed. It reminds us of our Lord's declaration,—“He that is not *with* me is *against* me.” It may also perplex us, by suggesting the reverse of this declaration spoken by the same voice,—“He who is not *against* us is on *our part*.” This uncertainty is very displeasing. Better is an open, honest opponent, who is visible and tangible, than one who holds us in a continual suspense which leads us to hope for the best, and yet to fear for the worst.

When plans of operation have been wisely and amicably settled, either by a united body composed of different denominations, or by one community for their own immediate advantage, they should not only be carried into full effect, but be constantly sanctioned and supported by all concerned. The want of this, will be the same as the want of co-operation in the com-

mencement. In vain will the wisest measures be devised, and for a time adopted, if they be not steadfastly encouraged, vindicated, and enforced. The motto in every system of religious benevolence should be—PERSEVERANCE,—without this it will fall of itself. The ruin of families,—of armies,—of empires,—begins that moment when their measures and regulations are treated with neglect, or indifference. Let no plans be changed without very adequate cause; nor any improvement resisted when really called for. The former would be like those continued alterations in a building, which, by undermining substantial parts, endanger the safety of the whole;—the latter would prevent it's attaining that beautiful symmetry, and perfection, of which it is capable, and which are so much to be desired.

Who does not view with most pleasing rapture the present union of various Christian denominations, to give the word of God “the wings of the morning,” that it may fly to “the uttermost parts of the earth,”—to disseminate religious tracts, by millions, among mankind,—to instruct the rising generation in what belongs to their peace,—to establish missions among

“every kindred, tongue, and people,”—to alleviate the general miseries of human life? Yet, amidst all this, there is one lamentable fact not less remarkable than true,—that, considered as separate bodies, these very denominations which compose this wonderful machine, have not all that harmony and co-operation among *themselves*, which we so ardently wish. From whatever cause arising, it is much to be deplored; and whether any of these causes have now been pointed out, must be left to the judgment of discerning readers.

There is an example of *political* union from which “the children of light” may learn wisdom. The vast empire of GERMANY, having the Emperor as its chosen Head, contains about two hundred inferior potentates, who are no farther under his control than as to what concerns the general good of the whole dynasty. Every prince is governor in his own state; regulating his own affairs as he and his advisers may think proper. The free cities have also the same privileges and jurisdiction. But all are governed by general laws of policy, to which they have previously assented. This grand union is called THE GERMANIC CONFEDERATION.

In case of danger to the whole empire, or where a general interest is at stake; each espouses the public cause as one and undivided,—as his own cause, and *according to his means*. Thus co-operation is secured; all private, individual rights are inviolably maintained,—general safety and prosperity are promoted. Yet we easily perceive, that if any one of the German states should be disunited in itself, the whole must suffer in proportion. The application of this history to religious bodies, is respectfully submitted to Christians of all denominations.

Oh! thou Almighty and gracious God, whose nature is *unity* itself;—hasten those happy days when “EPHRAIM shall not ENVY JUDAH; and JUDAH shall not VEX EPHRAIM.” Pour upon all thy churches “the spirit of love,” which shall teach them to preserve “the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.” May they effectually learn of him who is “meek and lowly;” that, “growing up into him in all things,” as their divine head, and being “kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love;” they may “bear each other’s burdens,” and so fulfil the law of Christ.” EVEN SO:—AMEN.

THE END.

By the same Author.

*A CANDID EXAMINATION*

OF

*The Rev. Dr. Williams' Essay*

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MENT, and the SOVEREIGNTY of  
DIVINE GRACE.—

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